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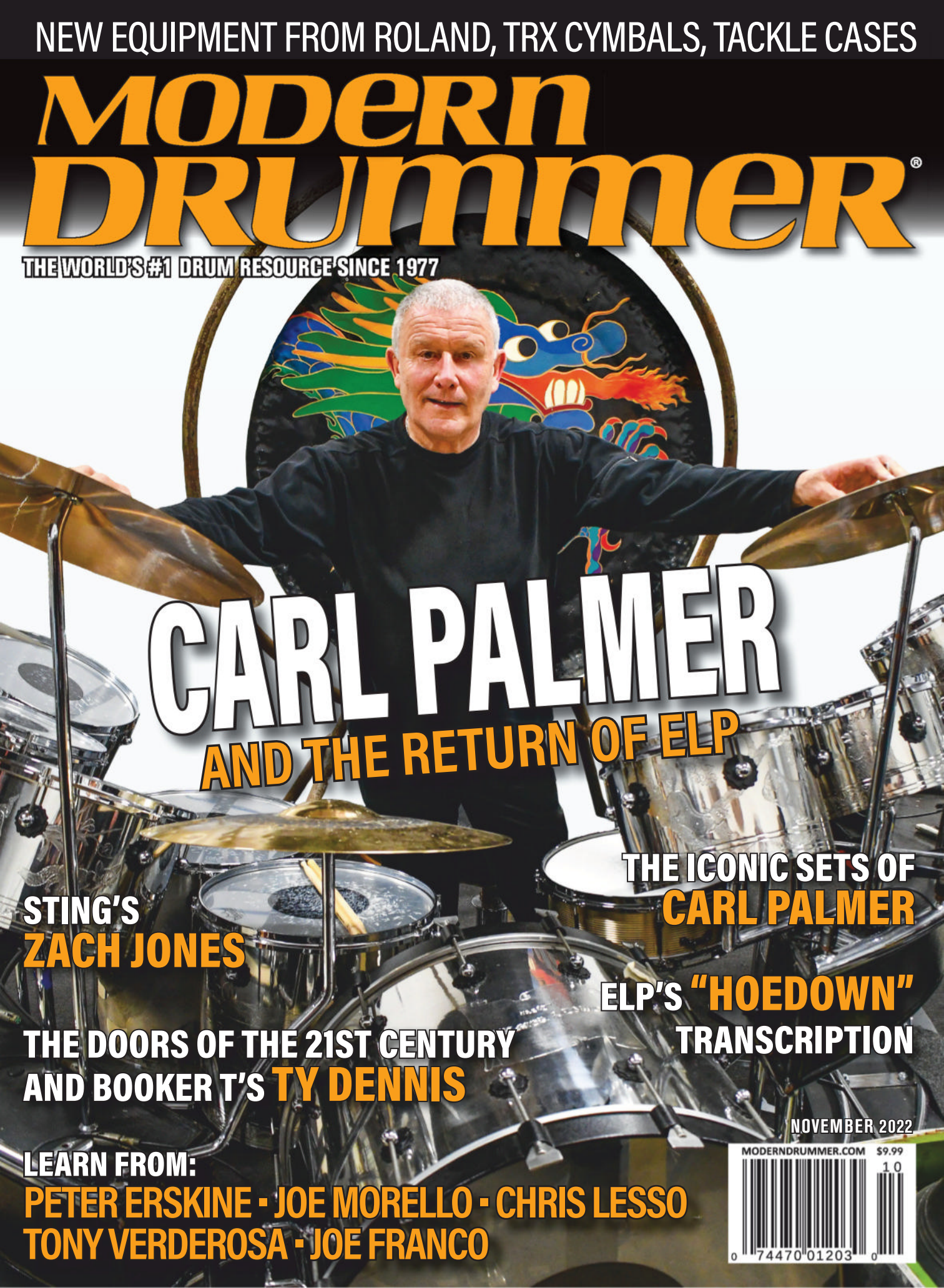

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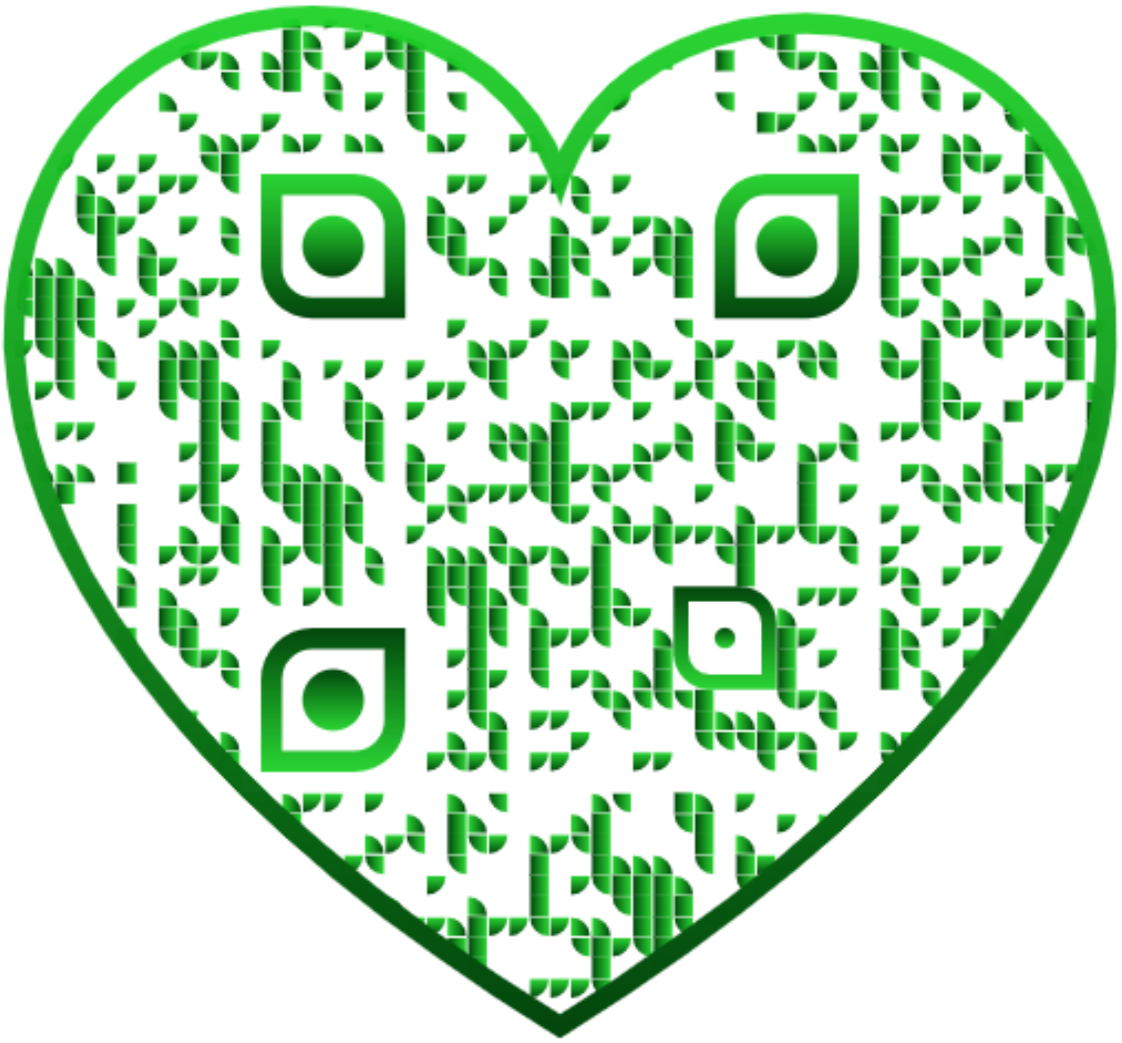

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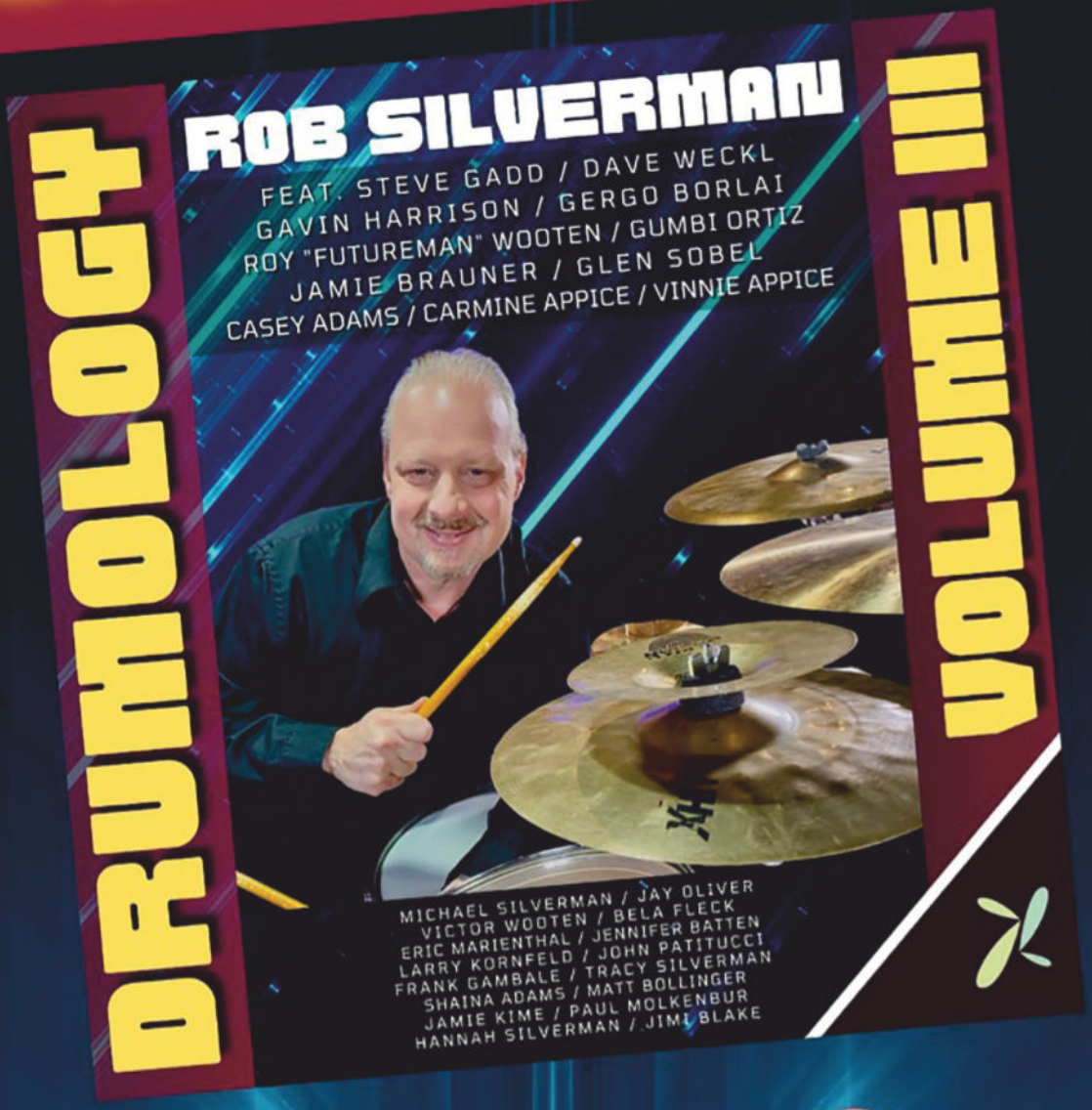

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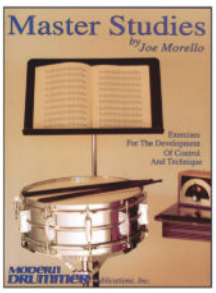

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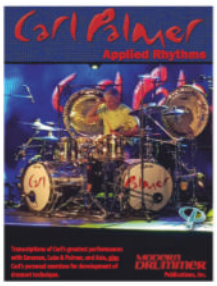

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AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Carl and I

This month's *Modern Drummer* documents another milestone in our drumming community's storied history: Carl Palmer and the reunion tour of Emerson, Lake & Palmer. It's hard to believe that EL&P has not performed for many years, but they're back, and Welcome Back (to be clear!) Here we are in 2022 and the tour will last well into 2023 and 24. In the spirit of what inspires each of us to drum, perhaps even the impetus of what fuels our passion for drumming, I want to share a short story.

At two years old, I was diagnosed with cancer of the eye. This forced my parents to deal with my three possible outcomes: death, blindness, or half-blindness. I got lucky and only suffered half-blindness. The trauma and pain I went through can be shared on another day. What I found during my battle was drumming, and in my case, Carl Palmer's drumming with EL&P. This was the 70s, there was no internet and barely any TV channels; We had magazines and LPs as the go-to for experiencing our musical idols. I absorbed any and every magazine and record I could find. I was inspired by Carl's virtuosic drumming that I heard on records, and his famous one-of-one stainless-steel kit that I saw in pictures. I had never heard rock drumming sound like this, nor heard the "sound" of a single-headed concert tom kit. Carl's inspiring drumming and sound had definition and projection.

Nearly 40 years after this story takes place, I was able to acquire the stainless-steel kit (yes, THAT one!) and collaborate with Carl on a Carl Palmer, ELP Legacy DVD/CD that we co-produced and mixed together. We even double-drummed on the track "Nutrocker." A "pinch me please" moment, it was unreal!

Carl and I recently collaborated on the video content and elements of the production to bring back the live experience of Carl's drumming with Emerson & Lake on this new tour. You must see this show to believe it! I hope that you will check out carlpalmer.com to find a tour date near you.

In the meantime, enjoy our extensive coverage of Carl and the tour in this month's issue of MD. I hope that each and every one reading this issue stays inspired and finds their dream moments in a way that only drums, drumming, and drummers can provide!

David Frangioni
Publisher/CEO
Modern Drummer

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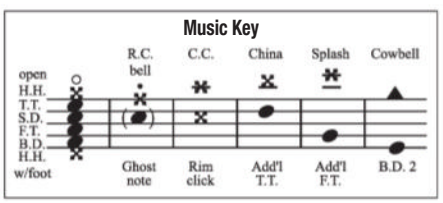

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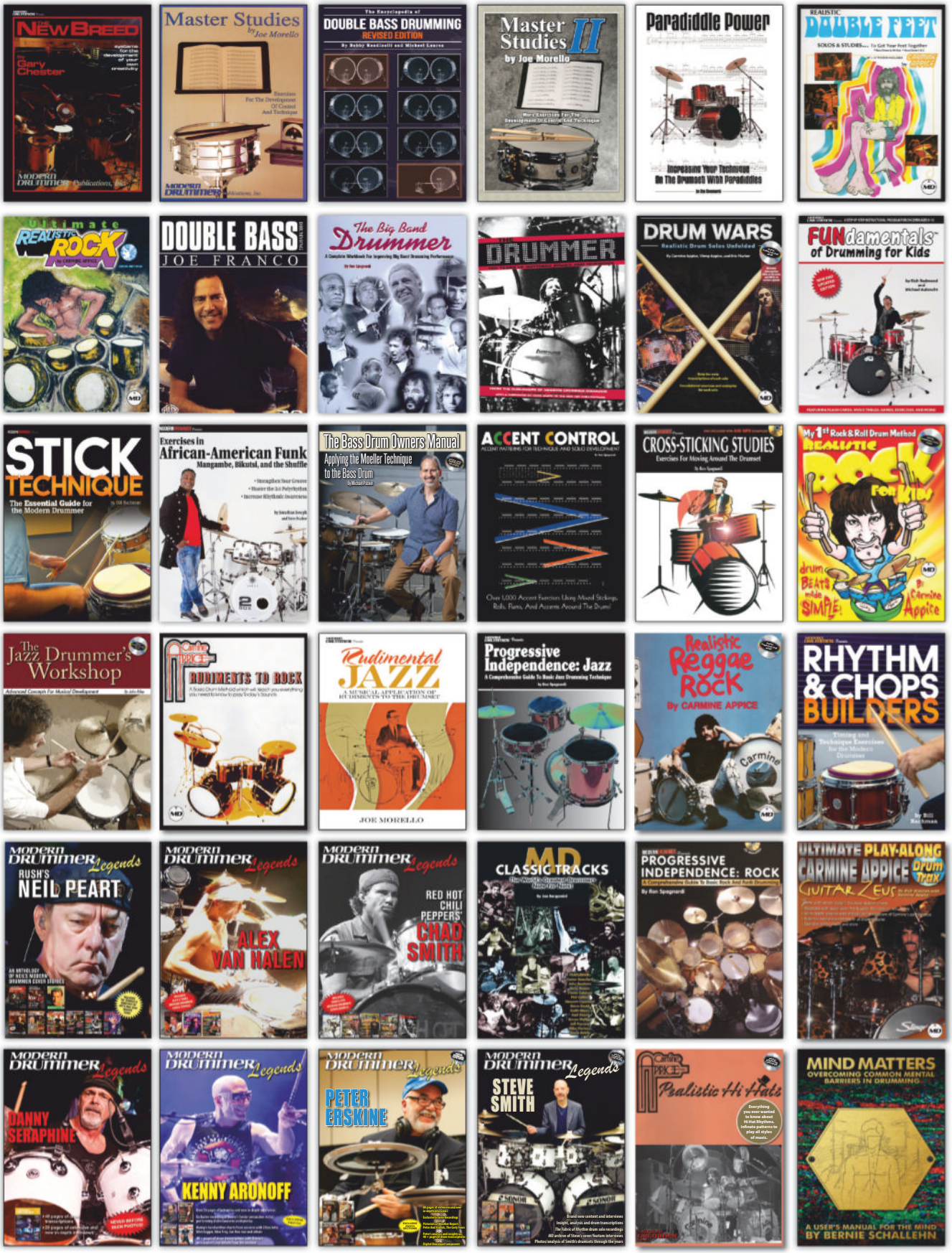

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Eric Carr inspires Kyle Schneider and "Fred."

This month's Kit of the Month comes to us from Kyle Schneider. The story that accompanies this kit is inspirational, educational, and touching. We'll let Kyle tell the rest…

"In 1985, I watched KISS: *Animalize Live and* I became completely engrossed with KISS drummer Eric Carr. I loved his crazy chops and his giant drum kit. Eric's kit has been my dream kit ever since that day.

In 2010 I told my father how much I wanted to recreate Eric's kit and how much I wanted a top-of-the-line drum kit. He told me to start saving $5 here and there, and eventually I would have enough. My dad passed away unexpectedly a couple days after that very conversation. However, I carried his words with me.

After saving for 10 years, I finally bought my dream kit. It is a beautiful Pearl Reference kit in Scarlet Sparkle Burst. In honor of my father, I've named my kit Fred. Here are the specifications of the kit:"

Pearl Reference Drums: Mounted Toms: 8x6 (Masterworks;) Reference: 8x8, 10x10, 10x12, 11x13, 12x14, 13x15, 14x16; Floor Toms: 16x16, 16x18. Bass Drums: (2) 18x24; Snare: 5x14.

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What Drummer's Don't Like

By Peter Erskine

There are reminders, and then there are painful reminders. I was on the receiving end of a most-unpleasant reminder recently concerning what I don't like, and I thought it would be useful to pivot the negative experience into a teachable moment. The purpose of this month's column is to spark conversation between the drummers who read this and their musical colleagues. Hence the title, "What Drummers Don't Like." Please share this with your immediate circle of musician friends, engineers, fans, and drum companies. For the sake of clarity, I will list these dislikes numerically but in no particular order.

1. We do not like gimmick-sound clicks like cowbells or cross-sticks when recording.

The industry-standard for a headphone click (that metronome musicians listen to when recording) is the UREI (pronounced "your-E" with an emphasis on the first syllable). "UREI" is an acronym for United Recording Electronics Industries. They were a manufacturer of recording, mixing, and audio signal processing hardware for the professional recording studio, live sound, and broadcasting fields. Their "click" sound is precise yet blunt-enough as not to cause high-end pain, discomfort, or damage to one's hearing. It is also less prone to leakage. In short, there's a reason it has been the recording industry standard for over fifty years. This is the available "classic" click sound in Pro-Tools (UREI or MPC), and if you're an Apple Logic user, you will find it under the name "Klopfgeist." (Why a German word? Because Logic was originally a German software product). ANY substitution carries the risk of a headphone accident, which is what happened to me the other day. I had my volume set to the UREI click, when suddenly, this pre-recorded cowbell click sound shot down the cue line with a sonic ferocity that resembled a pistol being fired directly into my ear. This was a bit of a session-stopper to say the least. Also, a steady cowbell beat in place of a click resembles nothing more than the *Saturday Night Live* skit ("more cowbell") having fun at Blue Oyster Cult's expense. All of this is to say: make sure the project you're working on has a UREI click or similar metronomic reference. This is just my opinion, but anything else is asking for trouble**.**

2. We do not like it when the front-of-house sound mixer adds dynamics to the band.

I'm a musician. If the bass player begins to take a solo, I play softer. The bass does NOT need to become louder than normal. And a horn soloist should not suddenly be louder than the rest of the band. Find a balance, then please sit back, watch the show, and enjoy the music. WE know where the softs and the louds are, you (the mixer) don't.

3. Which reminds me, NOBODY in their right mind likes subwoofers.

4. Okay, nobody likes the injudicious use of subwoofers. Which is, unfortunately, most of the time.

5. Drummers do not like to be told which cymbal to play when or where. Period.

6. If the drummer begins to play a more OPEN or SYNCOPATED beat, that is NOT THE CUE for the bass player to do the same. This is the result of our playing off the existing bass pattern or feel in order to create counterpoint and generate some rhythmic ideas of interest. Likewise, if the bassist begins to stray from the steady pulse they've been playing, that is not the cue for the drummer

to follow suit. The change is in response to — and is depending on — the current feel continuing. The same can be said or applied to comping: no "Mickey Mousing," *please*. Be original, be inventive, but be consistent when it comes to providing meaningful rhythmic information to the band.

7. We do not like printed-out drum parts that are 18 pages long. Drummers tend to use both hands while playing, so please consolidate your measures into a manageable page count. Also, please kindly consider page turns when notating important rhythms.

8. On a related note: **musicians do not like drummers who do not know how to read music.** Period**.**

9. Drummers do not like having microphones placed around the drums until they have finished setting up. Soundpersons: please wait until the drummer indicates that he or she is ready for the kit to be mic'ed.

10. Drummers don't like it when every song has the same boring order of soloists, with the bass solo being followed by trading 4s, etc... In fact, no one likes it. BORING. Jazz musicians: don't be lazy.

11. Drummers don't like stage risers or platforms that bounce.

12. Drummers do not like flimsy drum rugs.

13. Drummers do not like cymbal stands that weigh as much as a 1957 Chevrolet engine block.

14. Drummers do not like it when other drummers over-tighten common hardware.

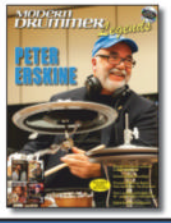
15. Drummers REALLY don't like it when another drummer sits in and moves parts of their kit around, and then does not take the time or care to move those pieces back into their original position. JUST SIT DOWN AND PLAY.

I was called to replace a drummer on a recording session-in-progress because the drummer got food-poisoning. I rushed to the studio where his drums were set-up and mic'ed. The engineer kindly asked me if I would like to move anything. I replied, "Nope. These are his drums, and this is his session. I'll be fine." And I was. In fact, it's always interesting to play another drummer's set-up. It makes the mind and senses that much more alert to everything that's going on. Or, in other words: JUST SIT DOWN AND PLAY.

16. Drummers (or ANY musicians) do not like it when someone grips their hand too tightly for a handshake!

On a more personal note — in addition to all of the above — what else don't I like? I do not like a snare strainer that causes a snapping sound to be heard when I engage the snares; silence is golden. I also do not like Velcro being placed on the bottom of the bass drum or hi-hat pedals (see dislike #12.) Such a practice should be declared illegal in all 50 states of the union as well as in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. And I do not much care for a snare stand that weighs as much as a sumo wrestler. Otherwise, I like to consider myself easy-going in addition to being easy to please! What are YOUR pet-peeves?

No matter what, I will suggest that you follow my newly adopted motto which I learned from a student. **Whenever possible, and in all circumstances, don't choose violence but choose peace.**



Check out Peter's drummer profile page, and get a copy of his Legends book at moderndrummer.com

I *do* like touring with a great band (w/ Darek Oles, Alan Pasqua and George Garzone)

ROLAND ANNOUNCES MULTIPLE V-DRUMS PRODUCT UPGRADES

Updated Sound Modules, New Upgraded Kits, and V-Drums Acoustic Design Lineups.

Roland, a world leader in electronic drums and percussion, announces multiple upgrades to the company's award-winning **V-Drums** product lineup. New TD-17, TD-27, and V-Drums Acoustic Design models have been released with significant hardware upgrades to previous-generation kits. In addition, the sound modules included with the kits have been updated with a variety of new features.

TD-17 and TD-27 Drum Sound Modules: Version 2.0 Updates

Updates bring powerful enhancements to the TD-17 and TD-27 modules.

The Version 2.0 update for the TD-17 module features 10 all-new preset kits and 10 kits previously exclusive to the module in the **VAD306 V-Drums Acoustic Design** set. The added kits employ 26 pre-loaded samples that can also be used to create custom kits. Reverb and Kit Comp effects have been added as well, along with 11 more MFX types for shaping drum tones. The module also includes support for content on **Roland Cloud**, where users can explore an ever-growing range of artist kits and more.

With Version 2.0, the TD-27 module gets even better with 10 additional preset kits and newly enhanced versions of the three most popular kits from the original release. New pre-loaded samples are also included. Layering features have been expanded, while parallel compression options and transient shaping enhancements provide even greater sound control. The module interface has also been improved for faster sound selection and drum customization.

New kits based around these modules will ship with the Version 2.0 updates. Later in 2022, owners of existing TD-17 and TD-27 modules will be able to download the Version 2.0 updates on Roland Cloud with a free Roland Account.

TD-17KVX2 and TD-17KV2 V-Drums

Since its launch in 2018, the TD-17 V-Drums series has powered the progress of developing drummers everywhere, combining expressive sound and authentic playability with powerful coaching tools and built-in Bluetooth for playing along with music from mobile devices. Now, the journey continues with two new kits that build on the top-tier models from the original lineup.

Along with the updated TD-17 module, the new **TD-17KVX2** and **TD-17KV2** kits add thin V-Cymbal pads that offer more natural movement and improved stick feel. The TD-17KVX2 features two 12-inch **CY-12C-T** crash cymbals, while the TD-17KV2 comes with one CY-12C-T. Both kits come with a 14-inch **CY-14R-T** ride cymbal with three-way triggering for edge, bow, and bell sounds.

TD-27KV2 V-Drums

Equipped with advanced digital trigger pad technology and other top V-Drums features, the **TD-27KV2** brings serious drummers premium playability and flagship-level expression at an affordable price. The updated TD-27 module includes many next-generation technologies derived from the top-of-the-line TD-50X. And with the TD-27KV2's spacious layout and large, comfortable pads, players can use all their standard acoustic drum techniques without compromise.

Expanding on the digital snare and digital ride pads included with the previous TD-27KV model, the TD-27KV2 adds a VH-14D digital hi-hat. The 14-inch top/bottom cymbal design mounts on a standard acoustic hi-hat stand for an authentic look and feel. Playing dynamics, stick techniques, and foot articulations are all captured with perfect detail, thanks to the high-resolution detection system and lightning-fast module processing. The TD-27KV2 also includes 12-inch CY-12C-T and 14-inch CY-14C-T crash cymbals with thin profiles to further enhance the acoustic playing experience.

The new TD-17, TD-27, and V-Drums Acoustic Design models will be available in the U.S. in October 2022. The TD-17KV2 and TD-17KVX2 kits are priced at $1,599 and $2,099, respectively, and the TD-27KV2 is priced at $3,499.

TRX CYMBALS ANNOUNCES NEW MODELS

New Dark, Dry DX Series Expands TRX Popular-Priced Special Edition Line. The TRX Cymbal Co. has announced the introduction of its new Special Edition DX Series. The line expands the company's high-quality, high-performance, handcrafted Special Edition line by adding a darker, drier tonal option to the existing KX (mid) and AX (bright) range.

Available in a full selection of affordably priced Rides, Hi-Hats, Crashes, and Effects, TRX Special Edition DX cymbals are currently played by 2008 Guitar Center Drum-Off Champion Jerome Flood, Jr. (Floodgeight), 2014 Hit Like A Girl winner Fer Fuentes (NIKI) and a growing number of today's leading drummers. To learn more, visit the TRX website at **www.trxcymbals.com**

HIT LIKE A GIRL AND PLAYDRUMS.COM LAUNCH A NEW PEER-INSPIRED COMMUNITY PROGRAM.

Leading drum industry organizations Hit Like a Girl and PlayDrums.com have joined forces to launch the Drumming Connects Us Community – a peer-inspired community designed to encourage and engage young drummers and draw new players into the excitement and benefits of active music participation.

Drumming Connects Us Community encourages adolescents (18 years and under) to play drums and support each other through social media engagement. Young drummers receive tips on how to get started on drums, how to connect with other drummers around the world, and how to be safe online from a group of six exceptional young players – Recker, Lola, Austin, KBG, Lil D, and Kii. Young drummers can get their posts and videos featured on the PlayDrums.com social pages by tagging and following @playdrumsdotcom and @hitlikeagirlcontest and using the hashtags #drummingconnectsus and #playdrums.

DRUMMING™ CONNECTS US

"This new Drumming Connects Us program is a way for drummers (under 18 years of age) to highlight their skills while sharing the fun of drumming with other kids on social media," states Antoinette Follett, Executive Director of PlayDrums.com and the Percussion Marketing Council. "To launch the program, our featured drum community influencers have created a reel to help promote positive messaging and safe social media sharing." View at: **www.playdrums.com/dcu-community**

"As new generations have emerged, and music has become more accessible and diverse, we're seeing the start of a new wave of drummers and music makers," says David Levine, Hit Like a Girl Executive Director and drum industry consultant. "Today's players have 24/7 access to videos, play-along's, and educational content on the internet. The Drumming Connects Us Community offers a way for kids and teens to find, share, and inspire each other."

Additional elements of Drumming Connects Us Community as well as a companion program called Drumming Connects Us Outreach will be announced in the coming weeks. To learn more, visit **www.playdrums.com/dcu-community** and **@PlayDrumsdotcom** on Instagram and Facebook.

TACKLE INSTRUMENT SUPPLY CO. INTRODUCES AN IN-DEMAND CYMBAL CASE FOR AN IN-DEMAND DRUMMER.

As one of the most in-demand drummers in Southern California, Marcelo Bucater spends a lot of time driving from gig to gig. On a typical day, he might start out teaching at The Los Angeles College of Music in Pasadena, then he drives out to Hollywood to do some session work, this is followed by heading down to Orange County to rehearse for a Disney show. Eventually he makes his way back up to the San Fernando Valley to end the day performing with The Little Brazil Trio.

The Tackle Instrument Supply Original Waxed Canvas Cymbal Case serves Marcelo very well for this type of round the town gigging on the go. It holds all of the cymbals that he might need and has plenty of room for snacks on those days that there's no time to stop for lunch.

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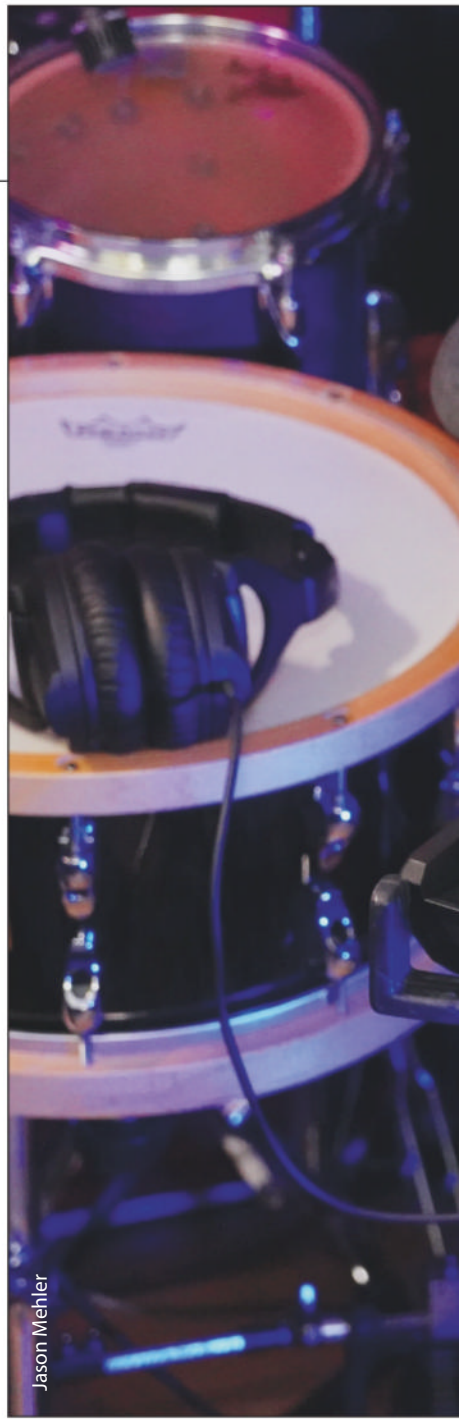
Roland SPD-SX PRO

By Jason Mehler


Jason Mehler

Since the company's establishment in the early 70's, Roland Corporation has produced arguably some of the most iconic and influential electronic musical devices known to the world. Their products have shaped popular music in ways that are hard to quantify. The Roland story of innovation continues with the release of their latest sampling pad, the SPD-SX PRO. Roland announced the release of the SPD-SX PRO in September 2022 as the new flagship model in the long-running SPD series. It boasts several professional improvements to their road-tested touring-standard SPD-SX model,. These improvements were based on user feedback. This month we will be taking the SPD-SX PRO for a test drive.

The immediate and obvious difference between the SPD-SX PRO and the Original SPD-SX is the larger 4.3-inch color LCD screen. Its generous size makes it very easy to read and navigate the settings. The on-screen menu is nicely laid out and colorized, which is a huge visual aid, especially with the pad LED settings. Many of the front panel buttons are backlit, making them easy to read in low light situations. If I had to suggest any improvements for future models, I'd request that the panel labels be backlight as well. They are currently painted on the metal and difficult to read in dark surroundings.

Once the unit is powered up, the pad LEDs light up in various colors, as opposed to the one red light from the original SPD-SX. The LEDs are easy to see from a distance and can be very useful. The utility of the colorized zones became clear to me while I was rocking out on the blue-lighted pads and accidentally hit a yellow pad that triggered a loop, wrecking my wicked drum solo. You can apply colors to individual pads, group them with tags and change how they behave when the pad is struck. I experimented with this feature a bit and made the vertical LEDs remain lit while the horizontal pad LEDs only illuminated when struck. You can dial in and fine tune your own custom colors using the onscreen RGB controls, just in case you want your pads to match your 80's fluorescent face paint & jewelry.

As a drummer with a "techie" brain, my approach to the SPD-SX PRO (and new gear in general) is to just dive in and try to make it do things that I want it to do, like plugging in old trigger pads and an off-brand pedal to control the HH. Luckily for me, both of those things worked, although I'd recommend the Roland HH control pedal as that is what it was designed for. The HH control input is new on the PRO and can either be used to control the HH or to attach an expression pedal. Among the other additions to the back panel are four additional trigger inputs (eight total) and four balanced direct outs. I noticed that the headphone jack was moved to the far right of the back panel all by itself, which made it very easy to find without flipping the unit around. Not sure if that was on purpose, but it helps.

I spent a lot of time scrolling through the preloaded drum kits and loops. They all sound great, as you would expect from a Roland product, and the improved pad sensitivity and low latency while pad switching was impressive. Roland's press release mentioned that the sensor structure of the 3 shoulder pads were revised to allow better sensitivity at shallow mounting angles. I gave it a try by laying the unit flat on a table and playing almost parallel to the pads. The shoulder triggers had a great response and the improved crosstalk protection that Roland mentioned, is certainly doing its job. I tried to force some crosstalk between pads by cranking the sensitivity, blasting the speakers, and hitting the pads hard but I failed to produce any crosstalk.

It is hard not to just scroll through and play around with the 43 pre-loaded drum kits which utilize some of the 1500 high-quality sounds stored in the SPD-SX PRO from the factory. Playing along to the pre-recorded loops is fun. I always get stuck on the TR-808 recreating 80's hip hop and freestyle grooves (FYI, it's kit #026, you're welcome!) That's always a huge request at family gatherings.

While traversing the internal kit layouts, I like how you can start a loop from one kit and then flip through to play another kit while the old loop is still playing. If things get too messy or you accidentally start a loop out of time, there is the trusty panic button on the front panel labeled "All Sound Off" that stops anything that is producing sound except for the click in the headphones. I can see how that would come in handy at a show when a loop goes rogue, or the band loses the tempo.

After getting my fill of the factory presets, I decided to try some customization. The SPD-SX PRO has a new layering feature that allows you to layer two different sounds per trigger, and you can control how those sounds interact with each other. It's very easy to do. There is a great little graphic representation of layers A & B that shows you where in the

sensitivity range that each layer is triggered. There are multiple layer types, for example, you can set the layer type to MIX which would cause layer A to trigger at low sensitivity. Then as you play louder, layer B in comes in with the second sound. I decided to create a snare drum with two layers so that I could completely swap sounds at a certain sensitivity. For this you only need to change the layer type to SWITCH and pick your sounds. This is great for practicing accents and taps or if you wanted to play kick and snare on the same pad with one hand. There are many options for editing individual sounds such as fine tuning the waveform or applying effects.

Recording samples directly to the unit is easy with the direct input on the back. I was able to sample a snare drum in under 3 minutes, including mic setup, recording, and editing the start position of the sample's waveform. The 32GB of internal memory is twice as much as the SPD-SX has and seems like enough space to store a ton of sound samples. You can also store data on a flash drive and access it via the USB memory port on the back panel.

Thanks to the great foundation provided by the original battle-tested SPD-SX, the SPD-SX PRO does a lot of things right. There's very little to dislike about this sampling pad. What it does, it does well, and most tasks are refreshingly easy to carry out. The Roland SPD-SX PRO retails for $1,199.00 .

roland.com

Alex Kluft

Carl Palmer: Welome Back My Friends...

By Mark Griffith

Carl Palmer is a drumming legend. Name another drummer who had #1 hits with four different bands? His drumming in Emerson, Lake, & Palmer is epic and renowned. His drum parts and playing in the band Asia are unforgettable. His larger-than-life drumsets are etched in drummer's minds around the world. He is one of the drummers that lit the torch for virtuostic and long drum solos in rock music, and he is still carrying that torch today.

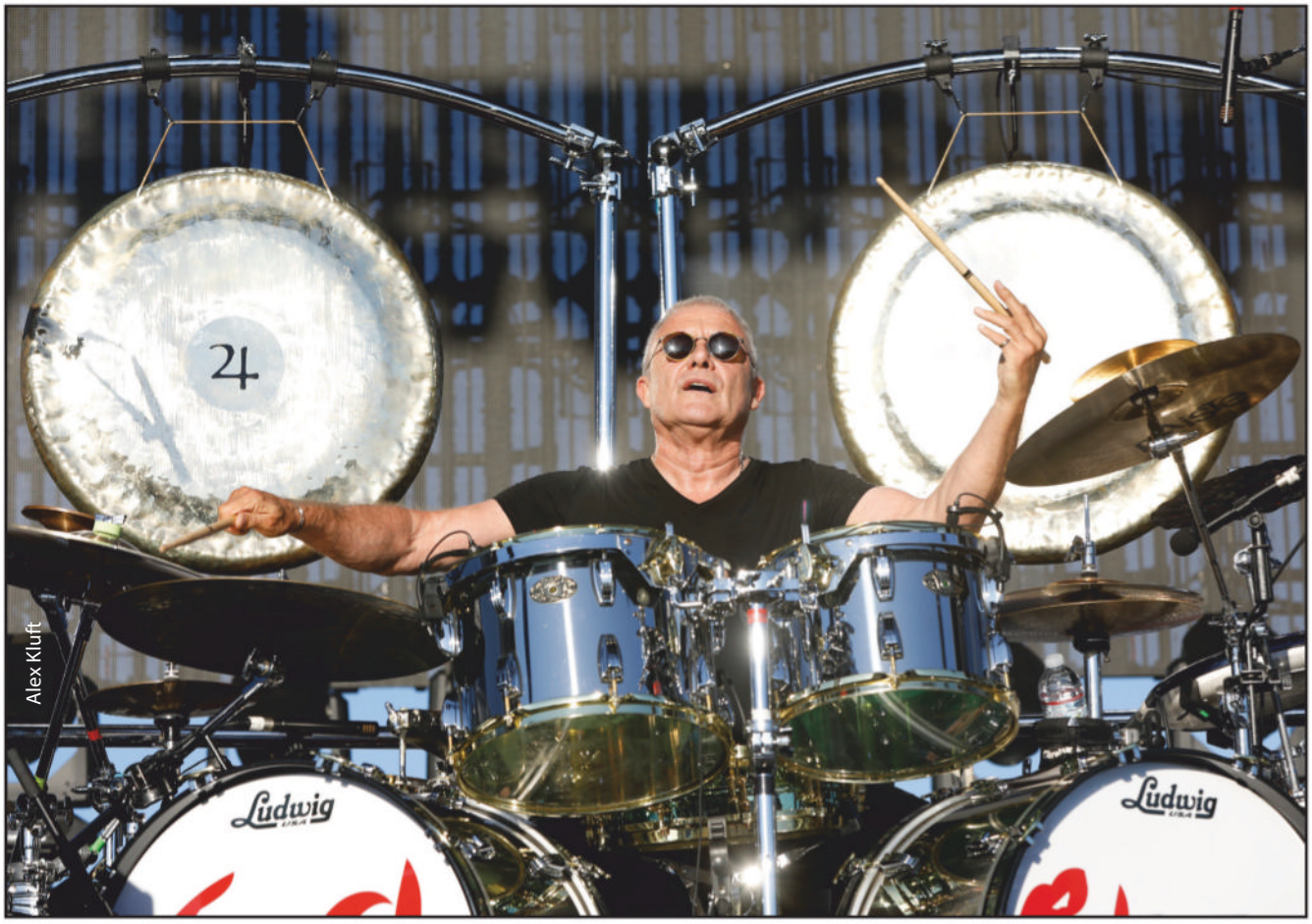
This month, Carl will continue the tradition of playing the big rock and roll hi tech stage productions that ELP began in the early 70s. His new **Welcome Back My Friends, The Return of Emerson, Lake, & Palmer Tour** is going to amaze and inspire a new generation of musicians and ELP fans. But this tour does raise some questions, and Carl isn't hiding from them. Both Keith Emerson and Greg Lake were musical icons who died in 2016. So how can this be The Return of Emerson, Lake, & Palmer? Listen to Carl's honest explanations about this new tour, his musical intentions, and the long process of putting this tour together. We also explore his drumming and musical background, the misconceptions of ELP, the new *Emerson, Lake, & Palmer Singles* box set, the differences between English and American drumming, and the many lessons that he can share from 50 plus years as a professional musician.

MD: This new tour is looking to be a big production, which is really nothing new for you. ELP was one of the first bands to bring a big spectacle of a show to the stage with a rock and roll concert. Can you explain what we will be seeing on your new tour?
CP: I will have three screens on stage, and both Keith Emerson and Greg Lake will be seen playing their parts on these screens during the show. I am playing live with audio tracks from one of our shows that was filmed at Royal Albert Hall in 1992. It was one of our best shows. When we did that five-camera shoot, the audio was all recorded on a multitrack and everyone was on individual tracks, so it was possible for me to have absolute control over the audio, and I can play with Greg and Keith as we played together live. The audio is superlative, and the video is very good. The video is not "Imax" quality, but I think it all really works well.
MD: It sounds like that big process could present some production issues, have there been any speed bumps along the way?
CP: Not yet. I am not playing the entire show from the Royal Albert Hall footage. I have my band as well. I am playing "Hoe Down" "Carmina Burana," and "Tarkus" with my band, so between the songs with Greg and Keith, and the songs with my band, we have a nice presentation and flow going on for the live show.

This is the only way to play ELP music with Greg and Keith in any way shape or form. I did look into the hologram routine, but to tell you the truth, it's a bit too *spooky* for me. If the tables were turned and I was no longer here and they were, I would want them to get the best live performance that I had ever done, and to do what I am doing with the screens and the live footage, not a weird looking hologram.

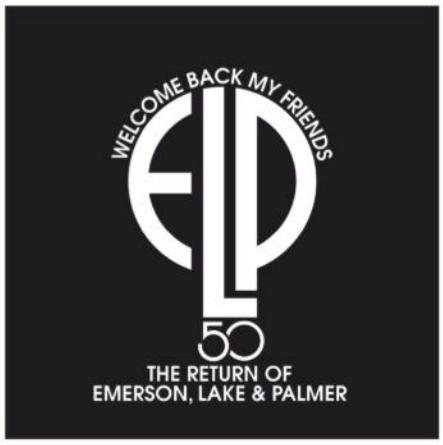
This Royal Albert Hall performance came from two sold-out nights. I was so happy to come across this footage. There were six tunes that I could incorporate into the set using Greg and Keith's actual performances when they were playing at their very best, and (as I said) the audio is spectacular. For me, this is the most honest and the best way to present our music today, I know they both would approve, and the Lake and Emerson families are both totally behind this project. If they were unhappy in anyway, with anything about this project, I wouldn't have gone ahead with it. I know that both Keith and Greg would have been up for doing something like this, as a band we were always trying something new, so now I am going to give it a try.
MD: But the new show is not only you and the footage, you also have your band with you, who is in your band now?
CP: Paul Bielatowicz has been my guitarist for 18 years, and Simon Fitzpatrick is playing bass and Chapman stick. They both sound fantastic, Simon and Paul are triggering a lot of synth sounds. I was never trying to put together another ELP. That has never been my intention. Sure, I could have gotten some Keith Emerson clone to play his parts but that's really not what I'm about.
MD: And that would be a "good imitation" at best.
CP: Exactly, and I am not into good imitations. I am really trying to show how versatile the ELP music is. In the past, ELP music has been played by orchestras, string quartets, jazz groups, and in just about every way imaginable. Since the ELP music has already been played in many shapes and forms, I have chosen to play it with a guitarist and a bassist (who also plays the Chapman Stick.)

I understand if the loyal ELP fans don't like my new take on the



Alex Kluft

music, I get that. This is just a new door that I wanted to open, and I think it sounds fantastic! I understand if you are a keyboardist or a synthesizer freak, and you have spent lots of money on seeing ELP concerts in the past. You love the band, and so do I. ELP was keyboard driven, for most of the time there wasn't a guitar in sight. We were weird in that way. Now the ELP drummer puts together a band with a guitarist instead of a keyboardist. I get that some people might not like that. But I started this band in 2001, I didn't bring it to America until 2007, and we have had a great time experimenting with the music.



MD: Some people have very strange opinions on recordings and music. They always want to hear things played exactly the same as it is in their memory or on the records. But they don't realize that songs are living breathing things that evolve, mature and change, sometimes for the better, sometimes not. But as musicians, we have to let the songs do that and see where the music wants to go. 50 Years ago, I'm sure people weren't very happy when some rock band called ELP started playing and interpreting legendary classical compositions either.

CP: Like classical music, I think ELP music is rich for interpretation. At the beginning they called us "*Prog Rock*" which (in my opinion) is such a cheap title to give our music. We were (and are) playing eclectic music that had elements of jazz, classical adaptations, folk, and rock and roll. However, many people forget that we created many wonderful ballads too. Why would you call ELP prog rock when our biggest singles were "Lucky Man," "From the Beginning," "Still… You Turn Me On," "Footprints in the Snow, and "C'est La Vie?" Music is for enjoying, not for labeling and putting into a time capsule.

MD: Are there points during the show where your band with Paul and Simon and yourself, and Keith and Greg are all playing together?

CP: Absolutely. In "Welcome Back My Friends…" the footage and the video was wonderful up to a certain point. So what we are doing is after the first keyboard solo we morph right into me and my band playing live.

Obviously, if Keith, Greg, and I are playing "Knife Edge" or "Lucky Man" I don't need my band playing. However, if I can improve things by having Paul and Simon double some parts, I have them do exactly that.

If this whole tour goes well, I won't be the only one doing this, I think it's all coming together very well. Of course, the whole show has a bit of trial and error to it, but we're getting it right, and that risk is what makes it fun and new.

MD: Everything that we do in music is trial and error, in my musical life I often lean on something that Tony Williams told me, which was, "I don't trust musicians who don't make mistakes, they are just not trying hard enough."

CP: That's exactly it. I like to live a little dangerously. Some drummers can "just play the chart," but that's not me. I like to get a bit of candy in there as well. It might not always be as sweet as it should be, and sometimes it might be slightly sour, but I'm always going to go for it.

You need to take risks to improve, I don't think that you can just continue to polish things over, you have to keep trying new things. I'm 72 years old, it's really important for me to take chances and try to improve. I want to go as far as I can. If I don't wake up tomorrow morning, at least I will know that I tried. I am going to stay at the top of my game for as long as I can. At the end of the day, it's not about how many drum clinics that you can do. For me it's about what music you create, what you can give back, and what personal standards that you have held yourself up to. This new tour is really my way of presenting the ELP music that I love, in the classiest and most hi tech way possible.

MD: This is really nothing new for you. ELP was one of the first bands to bring a big visual show to the rock stage, wasn't it?

CP: That's kind of true. I start the new show with an older video clip shot from above our three tractor trailers that we took on tour to carry all of the equipment. ELP was referred to as a "saber rattling group" we were really trying to do something new and different. We were just experimenting our socks off and being exceptionally "*English*." However, whatever we did was done to enhance the music. If something didn't work with the music, we wouldn't do it.

I met Keith when I was 17 and I was playing in London with

Fleetwood Mac because Micky Fleetwood was ill. That night Keith was playing in The Nice (with Brian Davison on drums and Lee Jackson on bass.) I had seen them before, but that night I watched them from side stage, and their presentation was so exciting. Keith was riding his L100 Organ across the stage and stabbing the organ with a dagger. When we finally got together, I told him that he had to keep doing that entire presentation, and we figured that I should have to do something too. I started with the gongs and the revolving riser, and Greg had his huge $10,000 Persian carpet that he stood on. That's where it started, and it just grew from there. The evolution of our presentation was part of each of our individual DNA.

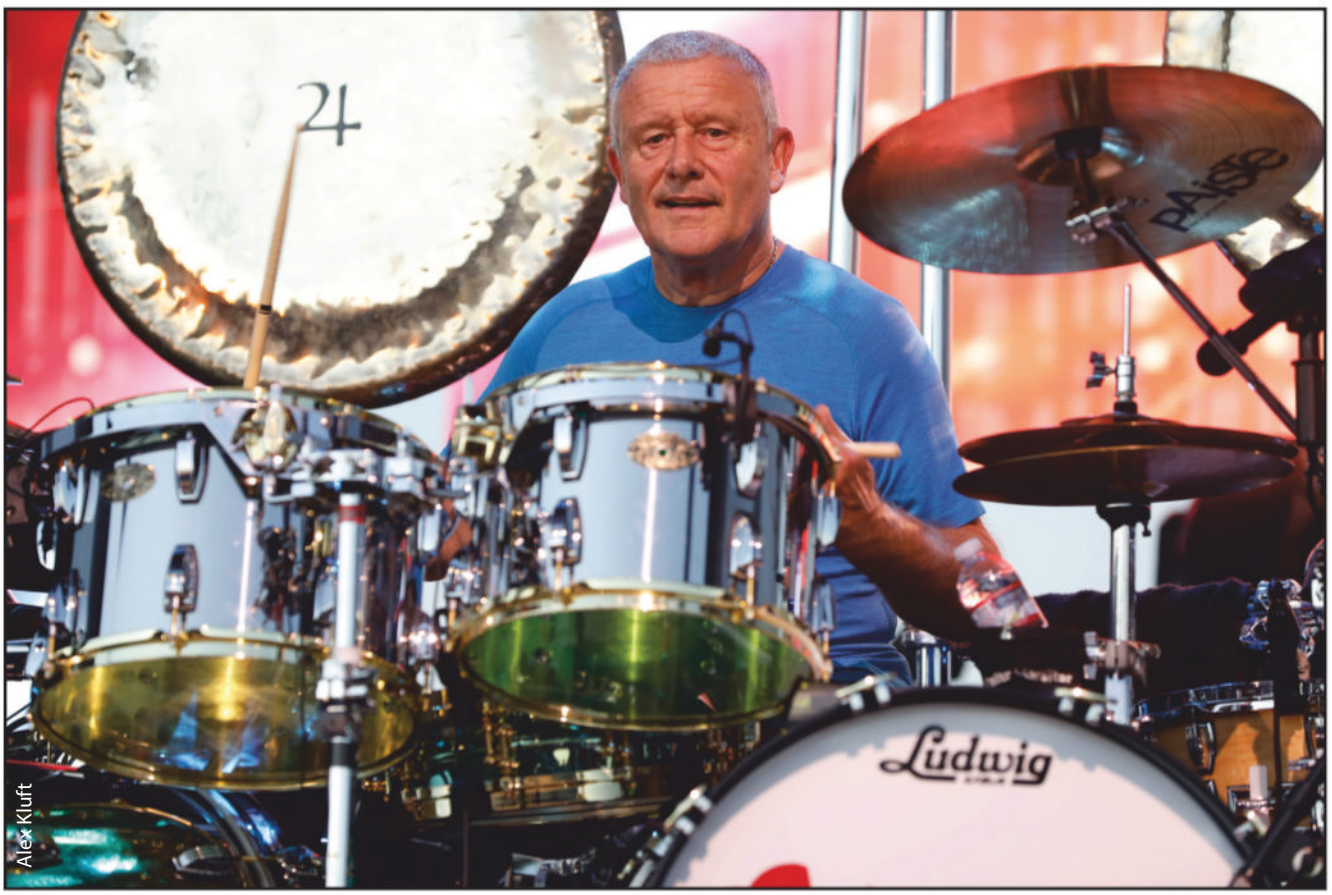
Pink Floyd always had a bigger show than we did, they were doing some serious stuff on stage. The English band Hawkwind was doing interesting things on stage too. David Bowie was doing the makeup thing before us. But yes, we were one of the first bands to create a big production of a rock show. I can see what you are saying about this tour as a continuation of that type of thing and this show being really nothing new for me. But I must say that what ELP were doing was nothing compared to what the Rolling Stones or U2 is doing today.

MD: Sure, but ELP opened that big door that other bands have since walked through. Now you are just walking through that same door that ELP first opened in the 70s.

CP: It actually began before ELP. In 1968, the first band that I was ever in was called The Crazy World of Arthur Brown. We had a hit single called "Fire." Arthur used to come out with a head dress that was on fire and introduce himself by saying, "I am the god of hell fire, and I bring you fire!" That was the beginning of psychedelia. He wore makeup, we all wore masks on stage. This was long before KISS. In 1968 that song was a #1 hit in America and England, and on the charts all throughout Europe. I picked up a lot from the experience of playing in that band. When ELP first got together, I didn't say let's paint our faces and wear masks, but I did say why don't we do as much visually as we are sonically. We did the quadraphonic thing live, but I thought that we should add to that with some visuals.

In the 60s and 70s you played concerts to promote your album, you didn't play concerts to make money. You played concerts to take the profits from the concerts and re-invest into future concerts to make them better. That is how you would attract more fans and sell more albums and make money. Obviously, the times and the business have completely changed today, but that's how it used to be. The unfortunate thing is that by the time the big arena tours had really taken off, ELP had broken up. We never really got a chance to do a big arena tour. We did lots of big concerts in front of 100,000 or more people, but we never really got a chance to do a continuous big arena tour. I don't want to sound like I am complaining because I'm NOT! I have had an incredibly blessed life and career.

I have been in four different bands that had #1 hit singles, and I didn't even write any of the songs. I don't know many musicians that can say that. But I played on Arthur Brown's "I Am the God of Hell Fire," Atomic Rooster's "Tomorrow Night," ELP had many hit singles, and a few #1 singles, and of course Asia's "Heat of the Moment" went to #1. I'm not the wealthiest man in the world but I'm doing just fine. I am just continuing to do what I do, because I have been so incredibly lucky to be able to do that for my entire life.



MD: In the notes to the new *Emerson, Lake & Palmer Singles* box set you say, "This box set of singles is very important to the development of ELP. The music that you will hear opened the door to radio around the world, and then the musical concept of ELP was born." What do you mean by that?

CP: As I said, to call ELP a prog band was really under-playing us. We were a big singles band. We had a lot of three chord ballads, and lullaby type ballads. Those songs were NOT prog rock. I came up with the idea for a box set of the singles. These were the tracks that opened up the airwaves for Emerson, Lake, & Palmer to record things like *Brain Salad Surgery*, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and *Tarkus*. To get those records played we had to have songs like "Lucky Man" "From the Beginning" and "Fanfare for the Common Man." Those are the tracks that made us radio friendly. No one was going to play 14 minutes of "Pictures at an Exhibition" by Mussorsky, but they would play "Still… You Turn Me On." We even had a radio hit single in Germany playing the theme from "Peter Gunn" by Henry Mancini. The singles in this new box set are the most important tracks in the history of the band. Then we got the original bags that the 45s originally came in and reprinted them.

Everyone knows about the long songs and the solos, but the singles are an important part of the story of Emerson, Lake, & Palmer. But in order to get the complex music across, we had to wrap it up in something. And those simple songs and ballads did just that. The last great single we had was off of the *Black Moon* album, and I am doing it on this tour, it's called "Paper Blood."

ELP had a very eclectic makeup. Greg Lake was big into Simon and Garfunkel and The Beatles, and Greg could write beautiful simple tunes. Then we had Keith who was about classical adaptations, he wanted to take classical music and make it our own. Musically, I could meet with both of them, I loved the Beatles, jazz, and classical music.

Alex Kluft

MD: What type of classical music were you listening to at the time?

CP: Keith and I were into Shostakovich's "Symphony No. 5," Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring," Bartok's "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion." I even liked the lighter stuff like the Elizabethan Waltz's by Mantovani.

My grandfather was a serious classical musician, his brother was a classical percussionist. They wanted me to become part of the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. That was a "proper job." At the same time my dad was a huge jazz buff and he played jazz around the house all of the time. He was getting me into Duke Ellington, Errol Garner, Oscar Peterson, Modern Jazz Quartet, and I was loving that music. Then I heard Elvis Presley "Jailhouse Rock," and my dad took me to see *The Gene Krupa Story*. That was IT! I was all in. I learned how to play the drum set which caused some havoc in my family, but I kept learning about classical music. In fact, when ELP was at its peak, I was attending music school to learn classical percussion. I even got to play a few nights with the London Symphony Orchestra. I played the tricky cymbal part during "Romeo and Juliet." Hearing all of that great music was a wonderful way to grow up. I learned more than I had to, which was wonderful.

MD: "Learning more than you had to!" There's an important lesson right there.

CP: But it benefitted me. Later on, when ELP was playing "Pictures at Exhibition" I went and bought the mini score so I could add the tympani parts and the bell parts in the appropriate places.

I think it's important to become familiar with as much music as possible. You need to understand what is going on in all of the areas of the music that you are playing. You also have to find out what you "do well" in music. And you'll never find that out, if you know nothing about it. You might grow into or develop whatever that is.

MD: You'll never know if you are a good songwriter unless you try writing a few songs, right?

CP: Absolutely.

MD: I am fascinated by the tradition of English drumming, although I have to say that most of the time you sound more American than British. A little while ago you mentioned that ELP was, "Just being English." What does that mean, and how does it relate to drumming?

CP: Everything that I play I have stolen from an American drummer that's for sure.

MD: But there is something that makes British musicians different? What is it?

CP: Everyone has to be influenced by someone or something, whatever that might be. In music you need to go to the best source of musicians to be influenced. Those "best musicians" can come from any approach: jazz, classical, big band, rock, whatever. In America you have more of everything, including musicians. I looked to America for musical influence. In England we do have had some great musicians: Kenny Clare, Jack Parnell, Ronnie Verril, Ronnie Stephenson. There is an awful lot that I could pick up from those British musicians. But for some reason, there was a slightly higher musical standard in America.

MD: But I think there's more to it than that.

CP: There is. Today, you can become a Dave Weckl or Vinnie Colaiuta clone, and many people do that really well. In England, we have all of the same information available to us that everyone else has to do that. But the English musicians that I know are better at disguising where we have stolen things from. I have found that individuality seems to be very important to British musicians. We go in through the front door (like everyone else,) but then we sneak out through the back door and try to disguise what we have stolen. Both

American and British musicians have high standards, but we Brits don't do cloning as well as the Americans. I don't know if it's because we can't, we don't want to, or that we are more aware of it. But we don't hero worship as much as American musicians.

My drum influences have been very simple. When I went and saw Gene Krupa play "Drum Crazy" in *The Gene Krupa Story* that was it. Then I heard *Time Out* by Dave Brubeck. Then I heard *Buddy Rich Sings Johnny Mercer,* but he wasn't playing much drums. Then I heard Buddy Rich plays Count Basie (actually called *This One's for Basie*) and a huge door flew open. For me it was about gathering the material and influences, and I think we Brits are a little better at the gathering process.

But I'll tell you honestly that I keep a list of younger drummers here in my office, I like to keep track of what they are doing and there are some great young drummers that I have heard recently. There are almost too many to keep track. I still try to steal whatever I can from these younger guys.

MD: Who are they?

CP: Willie Jones III, Eric Moore, Chris Coleman, Daru Jones, Aric Improta, the list goes on and on. There is a lot to be influenced by in American drumming.

MD: But there are American drummers who are just discovering some older British drummers like Michael Giles, Steve Jansen, Clive Thacker, and Jon Hiseman. So the lineage or the continuum goes both ways, backwards and forwards at the same time.

CP: Michael Giles was always a fantastic player. Greg Lake used to always tell me to listen to Michael Giles. But when I heard the sound of his taped-up drums that were deadened and flat sounding, I knew that I couldn't play like him. I had my drums tuned like a big band drummer and my dynamics aren't the greatest. He played perfectly for how his drums sounded, but I knew that I couldn't play what I played on drums that sounded like that, it just wouldn't work. But he sounded so original. He was the first drummer that I had heard playing double bass drums on fills on King Crimson's "In The Court of the Crimson King." You also mentioned Jon Hiseman, he was a phenomenal player as well.

MD: Can I ask you about your upbringing?

CP: I come from a place in the North called the Midlands, Johnny Bonham and I came from the same town. There were a lot of musicians in my family. As I said, my grandfather was a conductor, his brother was a professional drummer. My step-father was a musical hobbyist. He could sing and tap dance and play a bit of guitar. He wanted me to work in one of the shops that he owned. But when I told him I wanted to be a professional musician, he backed me all of the way. But he also taught me the importance of selling products at a very early age. He was very business savy.

When I was 15, I came to London to do a recording. Mitch Mitchell had already played on the recording as a session drummer. Mitch and I got along, he was very nice. I soon met Jon Hiseman who was playing with The Graham Bond Organization after Ginger Baker had left. Mitch and Jon were the "hotrods" in town when I first arrived. I joined Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds, who had a hit single called "Out of Time" that was written by Keith Richards and Mick Jagger. When I left Chris to join The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, but I asked Chris if I could come back if Arthur Brown didn't work out. He told me that if I wanted to do that, then I had to find a drummer to take my place. So I got Johnny Bonham the gig with Chris Farlowe. John hit harder than I did because he was really strong from working with his father's construction company, he had a very strong right foot, as we all now know.

When I heard (English jazz drummer) Kenny Clare, I asked him to give me lessons. Kenny was too busy at the time, but he found a great teacher for me. He was an American drummer living in London by the name of Bruce Gaylor. He was my first teacher, and he was amazing.

MD: What did Bruce teach you?

CP: Bruce was as student of Henry Adler and Jim Chapin. He taught in the basement of Boosey and Hawkes in London. The first thing that he did was have me change his drumset to how I wanted it to be set up. He wanted to see how I was setting up my drums.

Alex Kluft

MD: What a great first lesson.
CP: He told me that "ergonomically" the way that I set up the drums wasn't going to work. He told me that we wanted my legs to be angled downward from the base of the spine, NOT upward or parallel to the ground. That way you could get some of your weight into the bass drum, and you could keep the weight off of your back. So we raised the stool to the right height to create that angle, which also meant that I had to slightly angle the snare drum. He had me lower the ride cymbal so there was no tension in my right arm, and both of your arms were in the playing position.

We spent some time learning how to play swing time on the hi hats. When many drummers were riding the hi hats, they were opening them too wide. He told me that the two cymbals had to be "*sexy*" with each other and be close so they could shimmer. He had me keep them closed a bit and I controlled the tension between them instead of opening and closing them. That produced such a

better sound. We spent a lot of time on the jazz cymbal beat, the jazz ride rhythm. We did a lot of reading and technique, I played rhythms with my left hand while I played the jazz ride pattern, it was fantastic. I studied with Bruce for 18 months, and thinking back on what Bruce taught, he really knew his stuff and set me on a straight path in drumming.

I had a lot of teachers in my life. Early on, I studied drumset with Tommy Cunliffe, Lionel Rubin, and Max Abrahams too. In my 20s at the Royal Academy, I had Gilbert Webster, and I studied orchestral percussion with James Blades at the Royal Academy.

MD: Tell me about Kenny Clare?

CP: He was one of the most phenomenal drummers that England ever produced. He played double drums with Ronnie Stephenson on a record called *Drum Spectacular*. He was a great musician that played with everybody. Those who know about him, know him from playing double drums with Kenny Clarke in the big band that Kenny Clarke and Francy Boland co-led. I saw Kenny Clare with Jack Parnell and John Dankworth. He was one of the first drummers in England who had military drum training and had been in a military orchestra. His reading was impeccable, he could play anything. For about 10 years or so he did TV work, theater work, was first call for recording sessions, you name it. He had this amazing technique, I saw him play on TV first, then a few months later he came to my hometown with John Dankworth and they played in the park on a Saturday afternoon. He was a phenomenal technician, an unbelievable reader, and one of the nicest men that I've ever met. When we met, I sat down with him and played on a drum pad, and although he didn't have time to teach me, he made sure that I got the right kind of drum education. But he died young at the age of 54.

He played one drumset for his entire life, he bought it from from Manny's Music in New York City. It was a white marine pearl Ludwig & Ludwig in 13, 16, 18, and 22, with two different snare drums. Gary Allcock still has those drums and thankfully he has kept the set together through all these years. That set is a big part of the English Drumming heritage.

MD: What is your favorite Kenny Clare recording?

CP: *Drum Spectacular* is my favorite. And you don't only get to hear Kenny, but you get to hear Ronnie Stephenson too. Ronnie was one of the first jazz drummers to start playing matched grip.

MD: Did you know or get to see and hear Phil Seaman?

CP: Yes, he was phenomenal, a great reader, but he just got too involved in drinking and drugs. He was the first drummer in England to play *West Side Story* (the musical) in the theater. Kenny Clare played it after Phil. Phil was one of the all-time great jazz drummers, but he made a living in theaters. However, he wasn't always straight enough to do theater work.

MD: Since you are 72 now, and because Bruce Gaylor set you up so well ergonomically early on, have you had any physical issues that were drum related?

CP: No, never. Everything that could go wrong physically will happen via the back. The angle from your lower back to your legs is so important. If the angle is too small, it causes a lot of pressure on your lower back. If you can get that angle right, it alleviates the pressure on your lower back and any pressure or pain that would create. Doctors have told me that if you get that angle correct, it will almost self-correct everything else. The only other issue to sort out is how high your ride cymbals are. I know that some crashes have to be higher, but the height of the ride cymbal is very important to eliminating fatigue.

There is always going to be people who sit low and have no problems. Look at Tommy Aldridge, he has been sitting low forever, and he's as fit as a fiddle. But then look at Phil Collins, and the awful angle between his lower back and legs, I feel very badly for Phil.

I have had both of my hands operated on for carpal tunnel, but that was from doing martial arts, and practicing karate for about 17 years. It had nothing to do with drumming!

MD: How are your ears?

CP: My ears are perfect. And I'll tell you why. I've never used in-ears, I think they are too direct. I rarely even wear headphones. I don't even have a stereo monitor mix on stage. I have one monitor with a 15" and a horn, and it's pointed out towards the audience. It doesn't even face me. I don't even put my drums in my monitor mix. If you don't have the drums in your monitors, you'll hit at the temperature (velocity) that you want to play. All I have in my monitors is the vocals, the lead instrument, and a little of my right bass drum. I already have the musicians amps next to me, so I get some bleed

from then anyway. I also get some of the sound from the monitors in front, so that suits me just fine.

MD: Do you wear earplugs on stage?

CP: No, but I do have a pair of custom molded earplugs that I will wear at rehearsals to elmimnate some ear fatigue, because rehearsals are usually longer than the gig.

MD: You have been in the music business for a long time, and you have had some ups and downs business-wise, do you have any business advice for musicians who are looking to equal your longevity in the music business?

CP: I have been a professional musician for 56 years. To be in this business a long time, you do have to make good health a consideration. Drumming is physical, but we have already talked about that. Looking after your health and getting a good education is always given to me. Whatever you do in life, you MUST do that.

MD: I agree.

CP: This is a business, and you have to approach the business seriously. As a drummer, I believe that you have to make a choice between two things.

Choice one: Do you want to roll the musical dice and get into (or start) a successful band and learn everything that goes on in the business structure of a band. If you learn all of that correctly, (and there is a lot to learn,) you will be able to go from one successful band to another. In that process you can bring all of what you have learned along with you, and you will become the person that people ask for opinions. When people along the way have asked my opinion, I would always have the best interest of the band at the forefront. I always acted honestly. I have become the referee in many situations, and because I was always honest and truthful, people always respected my opinions. Honesty is hard, and you lose friends sometimes, but if you can be diplomatic in your approach, people will respect you, your honesty, and your opinions.

Alex Kluft

When we started Asia, everyone knew that I wasn't going to walk in with a suitcase filled with songs. John Wetton was the tunesmith. But if John wrote something that didn't give me chills or didn't have a chorus that was worthy of him, he knew that I would suggest that we look at it again. In music, the payoff to honesty is that there will come a time that people will trust you not only with their business, but with their music. When I was asked to join Asia, I insisted that everything be split right down the middle, everyone should be an equal partner. I could talk all day about that process, but that's the long and short of it.

MD: Honesty, what a concept?

CP: However, some musicians don't want you to be honest. I don't get "liked" by other musicians because of my honesty. But in time, my honesty has shown other people the truth, and in time they have come to appreciate it. I'm not always right, nobody is. But I am honestly trying to be right and show others the right way. So that is one way to go.

Choice two: Play with other people and play with everybody. But if you do that you won't have any residuals coming in, and you'll have to be playing constantly. And that's fine. The best example of that is Steve Gadd. Steve is one of the greatest human beings that I have ever known. He is a great musician, and he has played with more legendary musicians than anyone else in music history. I have the deepest appreciation for Steve as a musician and as a person.

In my opinion, those are the only two paths to take. And either path is worth taking and important. I think of it this way, you have to have a way to make money while you are at home lying in bed. If you don't figure that out, you have to go to the theater or the club every time you want to make money. A successful band that owns their own publishing has income coming in all of the time. ELP has never given away any of our publishing. Labels have leased the publishing for periods of time, but after that time period is up, the rights come back to us. That all goes back to what I talked about earlier. I learned early on from my step-father about always having something to sell.

I'm not super clever, I have made some good decisions along the way. Arthur Brown was the beginning of the psychedelia movement, ELP was at the forefront of what was called progressive, and Asia was at the beginning of the whole corporate rock thing, so I have made some good musical decisions. I picked up a lot of knowledge over the years, and when you have been doing something as long as I, you better have been able to get something right. It's better to make a mistake and stick your foot in a bucket, and learn from that mistake. Because if you don't try something once and make a mistake, you'll never try anything. But in the end, you can't substitute all of business knowledge and meeting all of the right people, for dedication to your music and practice.

Check out Carl's drummer profile page, at moderndrummer.com

The Iconic Sets of Carl Palmer

By David Frangioni

Throughout the years Carl Palmer has played many different drumsets with several iconic bands: Ludwig VIstalite, Ludwig Stainless Steel, a Custom Stainless Steel set, a Premier Steel set, Yamaha, Remo... It's an extensive list. Carl's long-standing relationship with Paiste has led to the development of custom gongs, and a signature ride cymbal. He was also on the cutting edge with his early inclusion of electronics. All of this equipment has helped Carl develop an

identifiable sound and style that has pushed bands like The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Atomic Rooster, Emerson, Lake, & Palmer, Asia, and his new Welcome Back My Friends, The Return of Emerson, Lake, & Palmer Tour to the forefront. Carl's overall commitment to quality has fueled his quest to find and play the best products and sounds possible. Here, Modern Drummer Publisher David Frangioni and Carl discuss the many drumsets that Carl has played throughout the years.

MD: You have had some iconic drumsets through the years. I would like to ask you about four specific kits. Could you tell me as many details as you can about the stainless-steel kit that you played with ELP in the 70's? You had it custom built with the animals engraved on it.

CP: That kit was created out of desperation. I was at the time, and still am, a Ludwig endorser, and I had asked them to make me a stainless steel drumset. At the time they weren't very keen on doing that, and I insisted that I really wanted them to give it a go. They wound up making stainless steel kits much later for John Bonham, but they wouldn't make them when I wanted them.

I had experimented with the stainless-steel drums, and I like the clarity that you get. I enjoy wood drums, but stainless steel is louder and extremely clear sounding. I am still playing stainless steel drums today; I really like them. They decided not to make the stainless-steel drums and asked me instead to play the Vistalite jellybean-colored drums. My reply was that I was sorry, but I think I will have to leave Ludwig. I put my own drum project together. At the end of 1973 I had the shells built by British Steel Company. They asked me initially how thick I wanted the shells to be, either 1/8 of an inch or 1/4 of an inch. I had the shells made to a 1/4" thickness but I shouldn't have done that because it made them super heavy, if I had them made to 1/8 of an inch, it would have made them much lighter, and we probably wouldn't have had to reinforce the stages that we were playing. The kit ended up weighing over 2 tons! Finally, I hired Paul Raven to do the engraving on the drum shells which he did with a dentist drill, it took him many months to complete, and it turned out magnificent.

MD: The engravings with a different animal on each shell was a nice finishing touch.

CP: I wanted to carry on with the Octaplus concept with the concert toms in 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18. I wanted the lugs to look like an English Rose, so I had those designed as well. I used Gretsch die cast hoops, and all of the mounting hardware was made out of steel bars that were chromed. Those bars were contoured to the right angle and height. That height and angle was exactly where I wanted it. It couldn't be changed and that was that. If I ever changed my mind, (which wasn't the case,) we would have had to have new bars and fittings made to mount the drums. We made the consoles to hold the toms out of stainless steel too. That was probably the first time since the 1920s that a drum console was made and used on a drumset. The left console supported the 6, 8, 10, 12 toms, and the right console supported the 13, 14, and 15 with the 16 and 18 floor toms. Those consoles also had built in microphone arms at the right

angles and in the right places. It was actually a very easy drumset to set up, you simply had to pull it out of the case, put it up on the riser and plug everything in. In that respect it was super practical, and it was the first kit of its kind. If it hadn't been so heavy, it would have been the easiest kit in the world to actually set up. But it was so heavy that it took a couple of people to lift the 400 lb. bass drum, so that made it a bit cumbersome.

I really enjoy playing single headed toms, so the toms were all single headed. Another reason for the single headed toms is that I need to have one microphone permanently mounted inside the drum, and one microphone mounted above the drum. The microphones inside the drums triggered the synthesizer that I had going through a mitigator on the floor, and the microphone on top of the drum was for the PA. I played that drumset for about seven years, it was only when Emerson, Lake, & Palmer broke up for the first time that I decided to change drumsets. I put the drums in storage for a long time then I sold them to Ringo, and now you have it (of course) in the drum museum. Drumsets mean a lot to me, but not so much that I need to keep them around in a case forever. I'd rather share them and let someone else enjoy the set. I'm not super sentimental about musical instruments.

MD: When I have looked at different pictures of that set there seemed to be some changes. Sometimes you had temple blocks and sometimes you didn't. Sometimes you had windchimes and tubular bells, or gongs, and sometimes not. What kind of transitions did this set go through during the seven years that you played it?
CP: The temple blocks came and went, but that wasn't the biggest change that had happened. When we went to Switzerland to make the album *Works Volume 1*, I had that set in the studio to record. But I had a new rack made for the gongs. I had the two major gongs mounted behind me like I still use today. However, I had a steel bar above me coming out from both gong stands. Those bars had hooks on them so I could hang three additional gongs on either side of me. All of those smaller gongs had different sounds. Paiste had made me many different shapes and different size gongs. Mike Mangini, the drummer from Dream Theater, and Terry Bozzio have continued that idea today.

When I recorded my "Percussion Concerto" on the *Anthology* record, you could hear those smaller gongs that were hanging high up in the air from those hooks. Those gongs were also painted beautifully so it looked like a mermaid swimming. I may still have those gongs around somewhere. The bell that hung above me has

Alex Kluft

always been there.

MD: Tell me about the bell?

CP: In the early days of ELP I had a bell that hung above me. I would play the gongs and I would pull the bell hammer with my teeth. I had a small chain hanging down from the bell attached to a mouth guard, and I would give the bell a pull with my mouth as we began to spin the riser. When we were designing the stainless-steel kit, I asked my designer Mike Lowe about getting a new bell. The first bell was wonderful, but it was a bell that was hanging around a cow's neck in Switzerland and I convinced the farmer to sell it to me. I wanted a proper bell.

I went down to East London to Stepney to one of the very few bell foundries that was still left at the time. They made bells to order and supplied the bells for many of the churches in the London area, I don't even know if they are still there. My bell was one of eight that they made at the time, and like Big Ben it is slightly cracked. That's why those bells sound so menacing, because they are cracked. When my bell was made, something went wrong. For some reason it was slightly out of tune. I think they were going to scrap it. I told them that for what I needed it for, no one would ever know it was out of tune, and I bought that bell and began using it. We designed a fitting for it and put a safety chain on the fitting. We used a bit of

fishing line on the hammer so no one could even see me pulling it, and I played it accordingly.

MD: With Asia you stayed with a stainless-steel concert tom kit, but it was made by Premier. I don't think that I have seen another Premier stainless steel before or since.

CP: I think had a Yamaha set briefly at the beginning of Asia, honestly, I can't remember. The Premier set is a steel set that is chromed, but it is not actually stainless-steel. Stainless-steel and steel sound different. The stainless-steel shell has a little more high-mids, the top end is the same, but the high-mids are a little more pronounced, stainless-steel is fuller bodied. The Portodella brothers (who were the founders of the Premier Drum Company) wanted to make a steel kit instead. Roger Horrobin put that set together. I played that kit for several years. That kit was in 10, 12, 13, 14, 16. I can't recall if the bass drums were 22s or 24s. That was the only time I had the additional tom on the left in front of me. Now I prefer only the two rack toms in front of me. That set was strange, it had to have wooden reinforcement fittings inside the drums so the mounting hardware wouldn't make the shell buckle. I don't know why this was done, because it wasn't necessary for any of my other steel kits. That kit had a Japanese CP logo on the font bass drumheads.

MD: During the *Black Moon Tour* you started playing a Remo kit. What can you tell me about that kit?

CP: Remo had sponsored me since I was 21 years old. I love their drumheads, and Remo Belli was a great guy. Remo came to my house one day and asked me to take a look at some new products that he was making. I had gotten along very well with Remo, and I miss him madly. I told him that any time he had some new head designs I was always ready to try them. However, he was talking about *drums*. He had started a company that was making drum shells out of paper. Basically, they were paper mache. They were pressed paper, that is what the original design of the shells was. Remo was already making the most famous and best drumheads in the world, but he wanted to see if he could get these drums into mainstream music. I had a single headed white set that I used in a band with Keith Emerson called Three. The drums sounded "ok," but I was using a shallow snare drum and I was playing hard. The bearing edges on the shells started buckling under the tension of the heads and the impact of playing the drums. After a bit I told Remo that I couldn't play those drums without them making some major changes in them. That didn't occur, and I moved on and got away from those drums. I don't think Remo spent enough money and time developing the idea, but all of the original shells had this problem. I'm not sure if they are still making those same shells, if they do, I'm sure this problem has been fixed. I still play Remo heads because they are the best heads that are made.

In drums, I have always looked for something better. If someone makes something that is better, I want to try it. I was with Axis drum pedals for years because it was a better pedal. Then I tried a Drum Workshop pedal, and it was unreal, so I switched to their pedals, because they were better.

MD: Didn't you have a double headed Remo kit later with ELP?

CP: Yes, but the reason that kit was double headed was because it was filled with foam, and I was triggering all of my sounds. Greg Lake pushed me to try to play my own samples with that kit. I managed to get that concept working where you are playing (what appear to be) real drums but you are only using them to trigger samples. Some companies are still working on that idea today. I had those little triggers that you glued on the heads, but they were very inconsistent. I spent every day trying to fix the triggers and the samples, it was a nightmare. I recorded with that set, I did a European tour with that set, but I just had to say *no more*.

MD: What sounds were you triggering?

CP: I had two samplers with my drum sounds. And those sounds could be switched with the mitigator. Years ago, I did a lot of that

stuff, but I got tired of it. It is just so time consuming. I know that electronics have come a long way, but the microphones and the outboard gear today sounds so good that it's easier (for me) to get a great drum sound through the PA. Call me old fashioned, but that's what I am doing.

MD: Are you still using the Korg Wavedrum?

CP: Yes, that is the only piece of electronics that I am still using. I actually started using that on the more recent Asia tours, for the big *reverby* snare and tambourine sound at the beginning of "Heat of the Moment."

MD: That brings us to the Ludwig kit that you have been playing for quite some time.

CP: I went back to Ludwig in 2004, and I was playing the Ludwig Vistalite's for about three years. They were working fine, but I asked them if they could make stainless steel drums again? We talked about it back and forth for a few years, and finally in 2009 they made plans for the Ludwig 100th Anniversary Stainless Steel drumset. They explained to me that Ronn Dunnett was going to make the shell, and that these shells would be far superior to what they were before. The stainless-steel shells that they made for John Bonham back in the day had a rounded bearing edge just like a wooden shell or like one that you would find on a metal snare drum. That edge was never very sharp, and the stainless-steel kits would have sounded better with a sharper edge.

The Ludwig stainless-steel set that I am playing now is from 2009. It is a double headed set and has almost razor-sharp edges. The edge is slightly rounded so it won't cut through a head, but it's a sharp edge and the shells are super thin. When I put a head on these shells it resonates so much more than anything else that I have ever played. These drums are the true sound of stainless-steel drums.

I have been playing this set for 13 years, in that time I have refurbished it a bit. I have put on new hoops and gotten some new stands. But I have never had the shells polished, and I'll tell you why. If you polish the set you have to take off the badges, and I don't want to ever take of the 100th Anniversary badge. If the badge was to be removed someone could argue that they weren't actually made in 2009, I know how vintage drum dealers and collectors think. I am doing that for my own piece of mind. Sure, some things have worn out or rusted, and I have changed them, that had to be done. But I never want the shells polished or the badges to be removed. I don't ever want these drums to be tampered with at all.

MD: How many Ludwig Stainless Steel double bass drum kits were even made?

CP: I only know of two of them, and I have them both. I keep one of them here at home in the UK, and one in America. Both kits are 13, 14, 16, 18. But the set in America has 24" bass drums. The kit that I have here at home has bass drums that are 18x22, that's the only difference between the two sets. When they originally made the 100th Anniversary kits they only made 24" bass drums, I don't know why. But when they made me the second set, they made the 18x22's. I must admit, I like having the 22" and the 24" bass drums.

All of the stainless-steel sets that were made in 2009 had brass lugs and hoops. When I got my original 2009 kit, my kit had all chrome lugs and hoops. My drums were made earlier, so they hadn't made the decision for the brass hardware yet. When I had to replace some hardware on that kit, I replaced everything with the brass lugs and rims. My English set has always had the brass lugs and rims.

MD: What exact drum sizes and cymbals are you using for this new tour?

CP: The Ludwig Stainless Steel Drums 100th Anniversary set: two 16x24 bass drums; 9x13, 10x14, rack toms; 16x16 and 18x18 floor toms; and my Ludwig Carl Palmer Venus piccolo 3.5x14 snare drum. I have started using the Remo Ambassador Triple X heads. My cymbals are all Paiste Signature Series: Carl Palmer Vir2osity Duo 20" Signature Ride, 20" Power Crash, 18" Power Crash, 20" China, 13" hi hats, 12" aux hats, various cup chimes, piggy-back stacks, and splashes. And of course, I have my 33" and 36" gongs.

MD: I have to say that working with you on the editing of the footage for this new tour was a pleasure. I am lucky to have had the opportunity to watch all of the outstanding footage and work together with you. I think people will be simply amazed at what we came up with.

CP: You had some wonderful ideas in the editing process, and I want to thank you for all of your assistance.

MD: Let me speak for the drumming world and say that none of us can wait to see this new tour!

Check out Carl's drummer profile page, at moderndrummer.com

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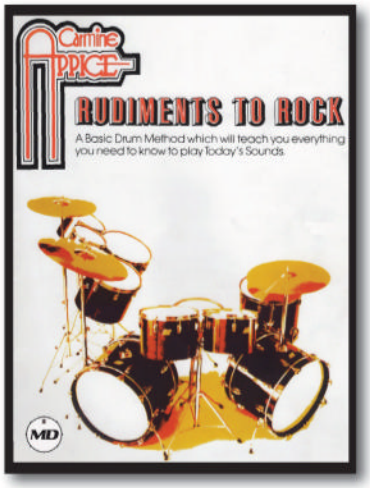

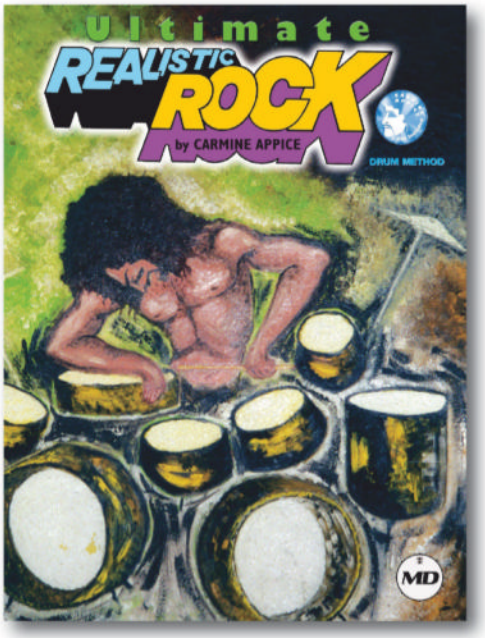

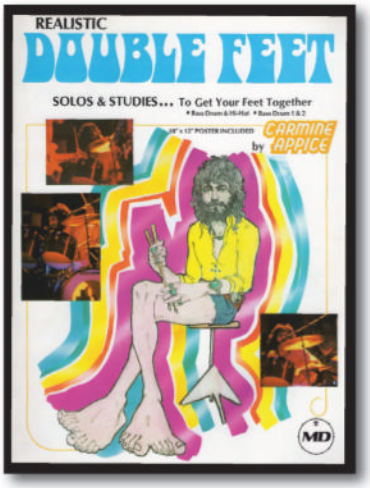

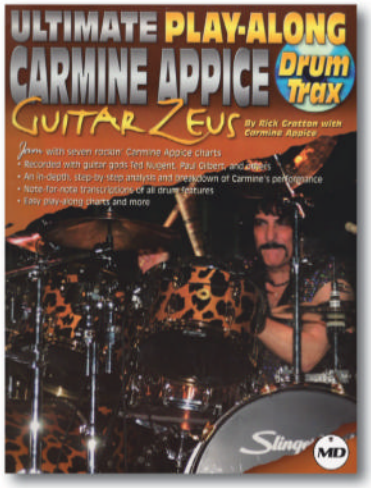

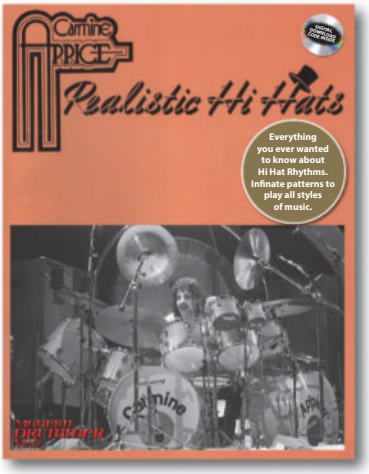

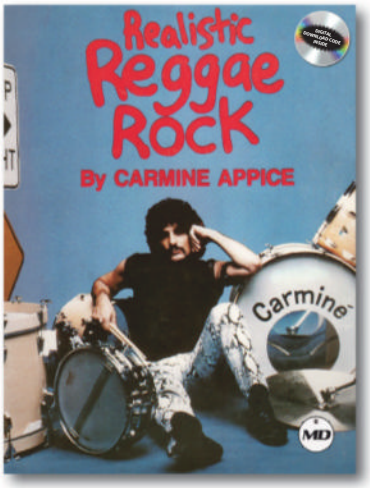

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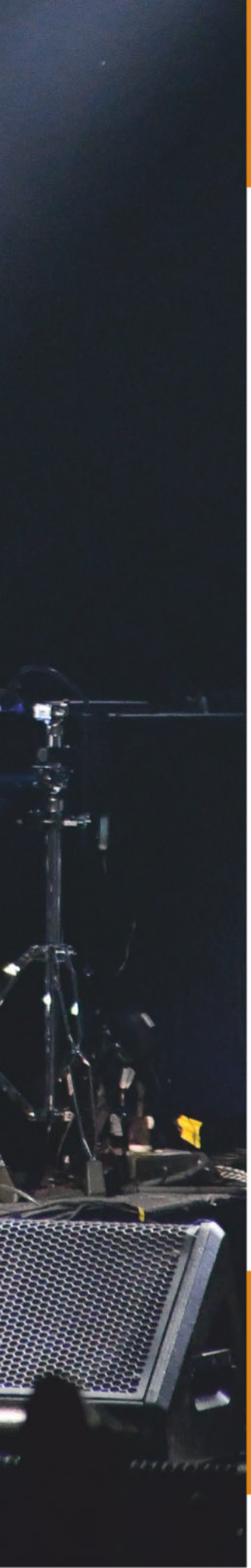


STING'S ZACH JONES

By Daniel "Ziggy" Laverde

Working with a living legend is a rare opportunity for the majority of drummers. With so many renowned drummers in the world, it is difficult to stand out and be chosen for a massive gig. The pursuit of a dream is always challenging, and for Zach Jones, the path was filled with trial and error. With an extensive history in production and songwriting, Zach has developed his abilities to compose songs for a variety of musicians and bands including his newest album *Plastic Soul* which is currently on all streaming platforms. Zach began playing the drums at an early age with the intention of making a profession through music. Zach viewed making a living by playing music as quite realistic, contrary to the general consensus. Most people are blind to the fact that everyone fails, but those with perseverance are the ones who succeed. Zach is currently on tour with the legendary Sting, where his drumming is being displayed at one of the highest levels possible for a drummer. Filling the shoes of numerous renowned drummers who came before him can be challenging but being true to oneself and one's abilities can be the difference between being distinctive and remaining static. As you read this interview, take note of the number of groups and projects Zach has participated in, and the number of years it took him to reach his current position. Use this to motivate and inspire yourself to reach heights that you may think are impossible.

Felipe Laverde

Felipe Laverde

MD: Zach, let's begin by discussing your childhood, how you began playing the drums, your influences, and how you gravitated toward music in general.

ZJ: My dad's a musician and so was his dad. Music runs in the family. I remember my first real conscious memory of music was hearing my dad play "All My Loving" by The Beatles at a house party. I fell in love with music, and I wanted to be around it and make it. I tried to pick up guitar and I kind of got bored. I tried to pick up piano and that didn't work. My dad would lead the music at church, and one day after school, I went there with him, and there was a drum set. I just started messing around and he showed me how to play a basic rock beat. It took me a couple of weeks but eventually I got it, and I was hooked, I was off to the races. I was nine years old. Then a friend of ours gave us a little cheap drum set that he had lying around. Once I had a kit at home, I was all in.

MD: Have you been surrounded by music your entire life?

ZJ: Yeah! My dad is primarily a guitar player and singer, but he plays bass and drums, too. He could play enough to get me started. My dad also played in bands with guys who would show me some stuff. I also learned a lot from playing along to records. I always had a tape player or CD player next to my kit in my bedroom. I would just play along with stuff and try to figure out what the drummers were doing.

MD: I've found that a constant theme among drummers I get the pleasure of interviewing is that when they were younger and learning tunes, they tried to figure out why the drummer played a certain way rather than simply memorizing parts. Does this mirror how you learned songs as a kid?

ZJ: I think that came a little later for me. Ringo was my first drum hero, and I loved his playing because of the songs he was playing on. It really wasn't until a few years later when I started to appreciate the genius of the way that he approaches those songs. I think it's the kind of playing where when you're starting out, it's relatively simple in a technical sense. It's easy to learn his parts and play them and they sound cool. Later on, when you have a little more facility on the kit and you go back, you sort of think man, he could have played anything. He always made these great and unique musical choices for these legendary songs. It's kind of impossible to imagine The Beatles songs without the way he chose to approach them on the kit. I think about "In My Life," "Ticket to Ride," and "Come Together." It would've been so easy to just play a basic rock beat, but Ringo always found a different way in.

MD: The Beatles seemed to be very influential for you at a young age, what other records inspired you?

ZJ: McCartney's *MTV: Unplugged*. That was my first real obsession. I had that on a cassette tape, and I listened to that over and over again. Then I started getting more Beatles records. A lot of it was my dad guiding me toward things. I also had a few '60s R&B/Soul compilations, so I learned how to play Aretha tunes and I was listening to Bernard Purdie before I even knew it. Stax records were also influential. Al Jackson Jr. is one of my total drum heroes. When I heard John Bonham, Ginger Baker and Mitch Mitchell I started to get a little more facility on the kit. Stewart Copeland was also big for me. I kind of hit the threshold where I heard his playing and thought "whoa!" That was a whole new door to unlock coordination-wise, especially in the way that he approaches the kit and the way that he placed accents. As I could do more on the kit, I started to be more attracted to drummers who did a little more so that I could find new things to try and incorporate. I'm sure I played really busy for a while because it's fun to be able to play new things. Thankfully my dad and other musicians around me who were older would always encourage that stuff but also keep me in check and make sure I was still playing the tunes, playing in the pocket, and not getting too out of hand with all the new channels I had.

MD: Were you a part of any original bands growing up?

ZJ: Yes, I had a band called The Sly Caps. That started when I was probably 11 or 12. It was me and some of my buddies from a community theater group we were a part of growing up. That was my first band and we

started by doing a ton of covers. Then, the guys in that band started writing original songs so that was my first brush with having someone come in with an idea on guitar and vocals and then getting to come up with parts on drums. That's when I realized that I had a real passion for arranging and later producing. Then that band was part of a reality show on MTV called *Made*. This was in 2003 and it was about teenagers trying to live their dreams. We had this crazy experience. MTV had a film crew that followed us around for about six months and we played a ton of gigs. We also recorded an EP and then got to go on tour that summer. It was the days of chat rooms, so people got hip to where we were going to be, and it turned into a bit of an audience. It was also a really cool experience to get in a van and go do gigs. I was only about 16 at the time.

MD: When that ended, and you moved to New York City. What was your motivation in moving to the city?

ZJ: What happened for me was I moved there when I was 17, right out of high school I moved into a friend's apartment, and I went to this place called the Drummer's Collective which is a school in Manhattan. I didn't really want to go to a regular college and the Collective is basically a trade school for drummers. I got to study there with some great teachers, Kim Plainfield and Peter Retzlaff, who were huge for me. Going to this school was a way for me to move to New York City without being aimless. The thing I discovered being 18 in New York City, especially if you look like you're 15 (like I did,) is that you can't really go anywhere to see music or meet people until you're 21. I just went back to New Jersey and played in bars and theaters, did all that stuff for a while. when I was 20 or 21, I ended up getting offered a musical theater tour with *Annie The Musical*. I did that for a year. That was a big accomplishment at the time. We toured all over the U.S. and Canada. I had a blast, but I didn't want to do theater forever. I wanted to play pop music. I saved up as much as I could, thinking that, "When this is done, I'm going to move to New York City again, and this time I'll be able to actually get around and meet people." So that's what I did. I saved up as much as I could and then when that leg of the tour was over, I moved back to the city into a friend's apartment and just started going around trying to meet people.

Felipe Laverde

MD: How did that turn into the big-time gigs?

ZJ: I was hanging at Rockwood Music Hall playing with different singer-songwriters, all under the radar sort of stuff. A band that I played with called A Great Big World got signed to Epic Records. That was the first gig I had where I was already working with a group when they got a record deal. They made a record, and I played drums on most of it. Then we got to tour and support that record. The single "Say Something" became a hit sort of overnight on the iTunes charts. That led to a couple of years of heavy touring with those guys. In between doing that record and touring I started a band with a few of my other singer-songwriter friends called Secret Someones. We actually ended up opening for A Great Big World on a whole tour. I was playing both sets on the road, which was super fun. In Secret Someones I was an integral member of the band. I was helping arrange the songs and getting to play the parts that I wanted to play. I was really invested in that band creatively. We got signed to Cherrytree Records and I left A Great Big World. I was a full member of Secret Someones and we got a deal. We made a record for Cherrytree, which I'm still really proud of. The band was Bess Rogers, Lelia Broussard, Hannah Winkler, and myself. The three of them wrote all the tunes. I really loved playing in that band. That is how I first got involved in "*the Sting world*" because the person who runs Cherrytree is a guy named Martin Kierszenbaum, who now manages Sting. When we signed with Cherrytree I thought, maybe I'll get to meet Sting. I was a huge fan of his and a huge Police fan. Martin is very much a guy who likes to get his artists working together on projects, so I got invited to do a session with Sting and that was my first experience with him. I met him and within minutes we were playing music together, that was really cool.

MD: That must have felt very surreal for you.

ZJ: It was wild! That was the beginning of intermittent work with him over the course of several years. They would call me occasionally to do a session or a TV appearance. I still had Secret Someones but we all chose to stop doing it for various reasons. After that ended, I went back to New York City doing the freelance life and getting more into producing records. My partner in production is a guy named Oscar Albis Rodriguez. He and I started doing a bunch more production stuff for other artists which we still do. I was really focusing on production for a number of years. Every once in a while, I'd get a call from Sting and go do something with him. Then, this year I got the big call to do a tour. It was sort of a long process of getting to know each other. Every time I worked with him I would think, okay, maybe that was it, maybe that's the last time.

MD: Did you ever get starstruck working with Sting?

ZJ: In a way there wasn't really a moment to get starstruck. We said hi, then immediately we were playing music. That sort of evens the playing field.

MD: How was working with Sting in the studio? Was he very set on what he wanted from the drums?

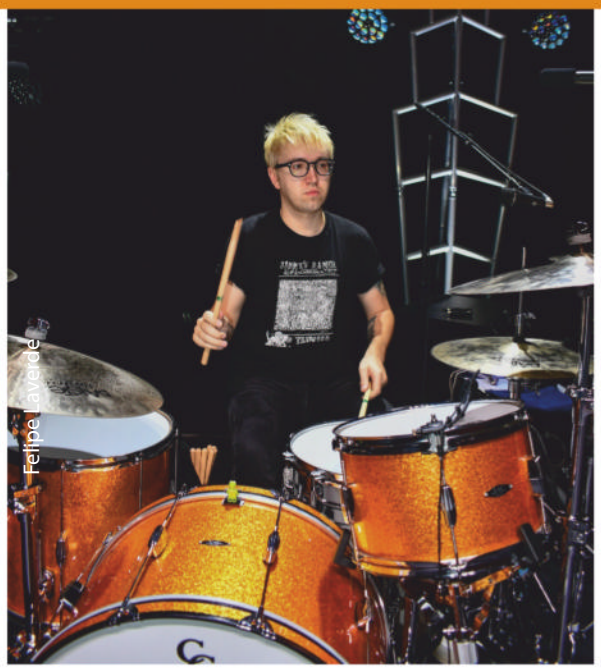
ZJ: He's always been very open minded about what I wanted to play. He'll let you know if he doesn't like something that you're doing but

for the most part, I was free to do my thing. I always really enjoyed that about working with him. I got to play on a couple records of his. I played on a couple of songs on his album with Shaggy. They gave me a little bit of direction, but it was kind of a do your thing mindset.

I always looked forward to that call. In a sense, I was nervous but after the first time we worked together, I would get called again and that reduced the nerves a little bit.

MD: Did he play with you during the studio sessions?

ZJ: Yes! For me to be on drums and him to be on bass immediately connected us in a different way than if we were just trying to sort of small talk. It was really cool to connect on that level. Also, for me it was crazy because I've been playing to him for most of my life. I've played along to his bass playing a lot. To have him in my ear live was just a trip.


Felipe Laverde

MD: I saw the show and I have to say you played flawlessly. I also caught on from watching you that you didn't try to copy Stewart Copeland on the Police songs. Instead brought your own flavor to the mix. How did you approach these parts, especially the Police songs that Sting plays live?

ZJ: Josh Freese was my immediate predecessor on the gig. So when I was prepping to do the gig, I was mostly looking at recent live shows. I was listening to the way Josh approached the songs and the way Vinnie approached the songs before that. I also watched everybody that he played with in the past. I found some clips of when Keith Carlock, Abe Laboriel Jr., and Manu Katché all had played with Sting. The big takeaway for me from watching all these great drummers play the show is that everybody played it in their own style. I thought, why am I going to try to copy someone else's thing if everyone on this gig before me obviously had the latitude to play the way that they played. The impression I got through working with him was that I was being encouraged to just be myself and play like myself. I tried to learn the bones of the arrangements based on what they had done most recently. But in terms of the way that I played it, I approached it like, "How do I want to play these *songs*?" As opposed to, "How do I want to play these *drum parts*?"

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MD: How did you approach Sting's newer material?
ZJ: I learned those a little more verbatim because they hadn't really played them live that much before. Sting's played "Every Little Thing She Does is Magic" a million times. But the new songs he's played maybe three times before I got the gig. So I stuck a little closer to the recordings when we first did them. Now they have kind of evolved in their own way.
MD: Are you able to add your input or does Sting take the reins?
ZJ: It's very much like do your thing until you hear otherwise, not that anyone has ever said that to me but that's kind of my interpretation of the vibe. When we first rehearsed together, I just played the tunes the way that I heard them. If something's not working for him, he'll say, "don't play a fill there" or "go half time for this part." Also, Dominic Miller, who has played guitar with him for 30 something years, is the preeminent expert on Sting music because he's had a closer relationship to it than anybody. Any time he has input about how something's feeling I always take that to heart as well. I'm very much encouraged to just be myself and that's why I'm in the room at the end of the day. Sting is one of those guys who could have whoever he wants on drums so, there's got to be a reason that I'm there.
MD: What's one of the biggest challenges that you've faced since you got the full-time gig with Sting?
ZJ: I guess the biggest challenge is internal. It's hard when you think about the roster of drummers who have done this gig. It can be overwhelming if you let it. I have my moments where I get in my own way psychologically, but I just have to remind myself to be myself and play the way that I play. It's very tough to follow all of the guys who have been on this gig before me, but I have so much respect for them, and I love the way that every one of them plays. But like I said, when I watch those clips, the thing I always come back to is, Abe sounds like Abe, Josh sounds like Josh. No one's trying to be anybody else, so why should I? Another challenge is being on the road again for this length of time after not really touring for a long time. That's just its own thing to get used to. There're weird sleep schedules and being away from home is hard but it's just part of the gig.
MD: What's your favorite song to play live?
ZJ: "King Of Pain" since the first time we did it has always been a highlight for me in the set. I love that song and I love playing it. I really like playing the ones that are super simple and I can just play time, sit back and enjoy what's happening, like "Fields of Gold." I have that moment to be an audience member a little bit because of how simple it is. "Brand New Day" was a hard one for me to figure out because it's a shuffle, but it's one of those in between shuffle tempos where I would do more of an up-tempo swing or a slower like 12/8 kind of shuffle. I really enjoy playing that, but I think I enjoy it partially because it was sort of a challenge for me in the beginning. That particular song is in 4/4 but it's hard to find a shuffle groove that really works at that tempo. I roughly just started doing what Josh was doing and then I found my own way into how to make it feel good for me. I tried to make it groove while not losing the plot.
MD: Do you feel like you've improved since starting this gig?
ZJ: I feel like I'm better at doing this gig than I was when I started doing this gig, that's for sure. I'm just trying to keep my ears wide open and really be present by listening to the music and listening to what everybody's doing and trying to make it feel good and support the songs. I think one thing that I've improved significantly is just pacing myself for a two hour show where there's not really any breaks. Once we get on stage, we play the whole time so that was

something to get used to as a drummer.

MD: The tone of your live drums is great! How did you get started using C&C Custom Drums?

ZJ: I heard a guy named Ian Chang, he's incredible. He plays with a band called Son Lux and I heard him at a club in New York City and watching him play I thought, that's the best floor tom I've ever heard. The whole kit sounded great, and he sounded great, but the floor tom was incredible. I went and asked him after the show and it was a C&C set. Immediately I thought, I have to get some of these drums. I should also mention that the drum tech on this tour is a guy named Gary Grimm. Gary tunes everything to perfection and makes it all sound so good every night. Gary's been around for a long time. He worked with Jeff Porcaro back in the day and he's also worked with Steve Gadd and Steve Jordan. It's crazy, he's worked with everybody! He's a great dude and he's really good at his gig.

MD: How did you guys collaborate to get the drums set up how you wanted?

ZJ: I just sent him some photos of what my set up looked like. So, he sort of got it in the ballpark and then I adjusted stuff such as angles and positioning. Then he taped down the rug and that was it. It evolves over time, but I mean as far as the tuning and stuff he knows how to get the drums sounding good.

MD: Are you endorsed by C&C?

ZJ: Yes, I'm also playing Paiste, Evans, and ProMark. The kit that I played when you saw me was a gift from my parents for Christmas five or six years ago which was very nice of them. I played that kit on *The Tonight Show* backing up Sting. I called the C&C guys and I said, "Hey, I'm going to be playing your drums on *The Tonight Show*." Ever since then we've had an artist relationship. I just got a second kit from them because we need to have two drum sets on the road so one can get flown around. I'm psyched to get it. I got slightly different sizes because why not, *right*? I also got a couple snares from them too, which I'm psyched about because I haven't owned a snare of theirs yet.

MD: Did you ever see The Police live?

ZJ: Yes! I have a bit of a story about that. In 2007, when they did the reunion tour my friends and I were like, we have got to go to them. The MSG shows, and I think the Philly shows, were all either sold out or crazy expensive. So, a couple of my friends and I went to Bonnaroo in Tennessee because The Police were headlining. Our mindset was, if we go to Bonnaroo, we can see about 20 other bands *plus* The Police. So that's what we did. I drove my car down with my friends from Jersey to Tennessee, we camped out behind my car, and we saw a ton of bands that weekend. We got to see The Police and The Roots who came on right before them which was very cool.

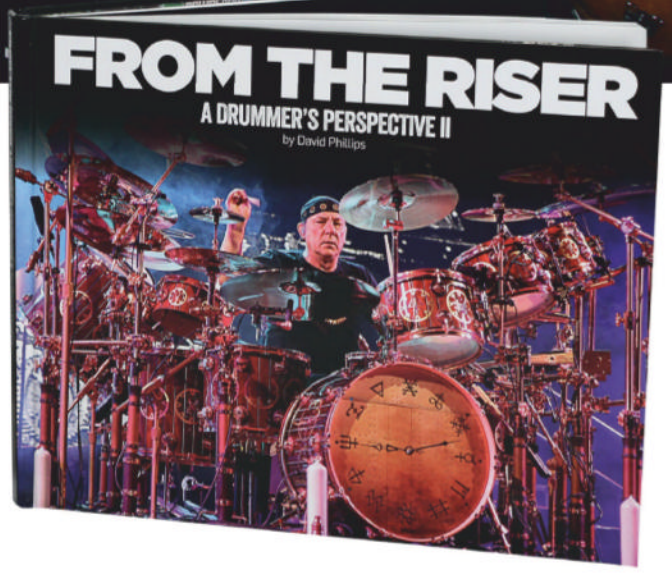
MD: What's next for you Zach?

ZJ: I'll be on the road with Sting into 2023 and spending my time off at home in Brooklyn producing records with my partner Oscar at Studio G. Beyond that, the best things that have happened in my life and career are the things I never could have predicted, so I'll just stay open and see what comes my way!

Check out Zach's drummer profile page, at modern drummer.com

FROM THE RISER

A DRUMMER'S PERSPECTIVE II



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Alex Kluft

TY DENNIS

By Daniel "Ziggy" Laverde

The support of a parent in pursuing one's aspirations can make or break the majority of people. For Ty Dennis the fulfillment of his hopes was undeniable. Ty, the son of a jazz drummer, was destined to achieve success as a drummer. The ambition that most drummers have is to meet their heroes, but as you will read in this interview Ty got to sub for his. In addition to his enormous successes as Robby Krieger's long-time drummer, Ty has filled in with other iconic artists. Not many drummers and musicians are willing to put in the effort and make the necessary sacrifices to reach their goals. Before his career reached new heights and stages, Ty spent many years as a session musician working with many artists and bands. Ty was able to reach unforeseeable heights when Robby Krieger and Ray Manzarek dubbed themselves The Doors of the 21st Century and embarked on a revival tour. Ty was chosen to carry The Doors' drumming torch and legacy forward. Ty Dennis is neither a superstar nor a household name, yet his drumming has made many admirers around the world very happy.

Alex Kluft

MD: How did you first become interested in music and drums?
TD: My dad Denny Dennis is a professional drummer. For as long as I can remember there were drums in the house. There're even pictures of me at 17 months old holding a pair of sticks. I was exposed to drumming because that's what my father did. He also played great music in the house which became my background noise. When I was a kid, he had all these great records. In my opinion, he had great taste in music. So, I was exposed to drums and great music from a young age. I had an affinity for it. He didn't force it on me or anything like that. Playing drums was just something that I wanted to do. It's in my blood, I guess.
MD: What kind of records were you listening to growing up?
TD: Some of the earliest records I remember listening to are the first *Headhunters* record with Harvey Mason and Herbie Hancock, the first James Taylor record with Russ Kunkel, Billy Joel *52nd Street*, Steely Dan *Aja*, The Doobie Brothers *Minute by Minute,* and then, of course, a lot of jazz stuff too. I would play along on the floor, and when I got my first drum kit, I would try to mimic those records.
MD: Did you learn a lot from your dad Denny?
TD: Yes, I was fortunate because he was a disciple of Freddie Gruber who taught a lot of dudes including Neil Peart. My dad was one of the cats in the seventies that learned from him. In turn, I learned a lot of the Freddie Gruber principles from my dad.
MD: Growing up, would you go with your dad to his gigs?
TD: Yes, I got to go see him play many gigs. When I got to be 16 or so, the first gigs I did was when I subbed for him on some little jazz gigs that he sent me on. I can now fake my way through jazz. I thank my dad for a lot of exposure to good things.

Alex Kluft

MD: How did you get started in LA becoming a studio session player?
TD: I grew up about an hour from LA. I made the big move up to Hollywood in the mid-nineties. Back then everybody had an ADAT studio. Back when there were a lot of clubs in LA, I started playing and working for a zillion original bands. I got immersed in playing for original bands and meeting songwriters. I did a ton of records for people that way. They'd hire me to record for projects or I'd be working for a band and then they'd want to record. That's when I started getting the experience of working as a session player.
MD: What were the biggest challenges for you at that time?
TD: Honestly, there were a couple of different things. It's a big learning curve when you don't have a lot of experience in the studio. When you listen back to yourself, you hear things that you might have thought sounded good in the moment, that don't. This helped me learn what I needed to improve upon. I needed to learn how to produce myself when I played. That was a challenge for me, learning to listen back and learning what works and what doesn't. The thing I still work on, and the biggest for me, is listening. When you're recording something or someone sends you a project, it's important to really listen to everything. For example, what are all the parts? What's

Alex Kluft

the guitar doing? What's the bass doing? How do I compose a part that interacts with all of this? It's a big challenge to get in that head space and to have the chops to do so. It takes a while to develop those skills.

MD: How did you get involved with The Doors and Robby Krieger? How did you transition from studio work to this new venture?

TD: I was playing in a bunch of bands up in the Hollywood area, meeting people, and recording. I made a connection with a great friend of mine named Angelo Barbera who is an amazing bass player. We were a rhythm section team and we connected. We would also recommend each other for gigs. Then Angelo got the gig with the big 80's band, The Motels. At one point they started looking for another drummer, so Angelo recommended me. I auditioned for that gig and got it. I did that gig for a couple of years. Then Angelo got the gig with Robby Krieger playing in his solo band. When Robby started looking for a new drummer, Angelo recommended me once again. That's how I got the chance to meet Robby, and eventually became his drummer.

MD: Did you listen to The Doors records growing up?

Ty and Robby Krieger

Alex Kluft

TD: I didn't know a lot of The Doors songs. I'd only heard the big hits such as "Roadhouse Blues", "Light My Fire", "Break on Through" and "Riders on the Storm" and I honestly wasn't much of a fan. I had a big learning curve when I got that gig because I didn't really know what The Doors were about. Robby handed me a bag full of The Doors live stuff and when I listened to it, I thought this is a different animal. I could see where they took it as a band live. I learned to be a big Doors fan, but initially, no I really wasn't.

MD: When you heard John Densmore's playing on the live recordings that Robby gave you, did you try to replicate the tone of his drum kit?

TD: I didn't replicate the tone and that was never something that Robby wanted me to do. I can't recall him ever saying anything like, "Hey, can you tune your drums this way?" Or "Can you get more of a jazzy tone." Anytime I worked with Robby and later when I worked with Ray, they

would never mention that. I was free to play with a more modern sound.

MD: After getting the gig with Robby Krieger you also got the opportunity to play as a part of The Doors of the 21st Century. How did that opportunity arise?

TD: Around 2001 I was playing with Robby's solo band. It was mostly shows in the United States. I did that for about a year. Then Robby and Ray, along with Ian Astbury of The Cult, and Stewart Copeland who is one of my drumming heroes, had plans to create a new version of The Doors called The Doors of the 21st Century.

Alex Kluft

It was a supergroup and they had offers to do it. When the group formed Robby invited me to SIR in Hollywood to go watch him rehearse with Stewart Copeland. I went to watch the rehearsal and that's when I first met Ray, Ian, and Stewart Copeland. I had never met them before. I watched the rehearsal and hung out a little bit with Stewart. Which was a very surreal moment for me.

MD: It must have felt crazy to be in that room. Did it change your perspective to see how he approached the same songs that you were playing for the previous year?

TD: It was different. Stewart just imprinted what he does on that music. It was really interesting. I was playing a version of the original parts, and he was taking those songs and imprinting his style all over them.

MD: What happened after that day?

TD: I thought my gig with Robby was over. I started looking for a new gig. Not long after, I get a call. I was walking in a Rite Aid pharmacy in Glendale, and they called me and said, "Hey, man, something came up and Stewart Copeland can't rehearse. Do you want to sub and do a rehearsal at SIR?" I said absolutely! I knew the manager because he had managed Robby when I played with him. He told me to come by about a week later and to bring my drums. I showed up at SIR carting my drums and set up. Then, I got to chat with Ray and Ian a little bit more. I remember Ray was about eight feet to the right of me on the keyboard riser and we started to play "Riders on the Storm" with Ray playing the keyboard solo part that everybody knows. I still have the memory of looking over to my right to see Ray playing while I was playing the groove.

It was a good moment in my life. I also had a big advantage. After all, I had played with Robbie for a year, and I knew a lot of the tunes and their arrangements. That rehearsal went well, and I told the manager, "If you need me to come sub again, I loved it. Call me." Sure enough, he calls up about a week later or so and says "Something came up with Stewart, he can't rehearse again. Can you come down?" Again, I said absolutely. He told me that I had to play Stewart Copeland's drums and I couldn't move anything because the group was going to rehearse the next day. I got there and I saw Stewart's green Tama Starclassic drum kit.

MD: That must have been a dream come true for you considering he is one of your drum heroes.

TD: It was surreal because when I was 12 years old, I would play along to *Synchronicity* in my parents' garage imagining that I was playing behind Stewart Copeland's drums. Here I am at 30 something years old and I'm actually playing Stewart Copeland's drums. It was a very cool moment. I remember that he had 12"

hi hats, with a regular ride and a flat ride next to each other. I just remember thinking, *that's different*… 12" hi hats and a flat ride next to the other ride. It was great because I got to play drums and hang out with Ray more. I remember going to the bathroom that day which was down the hall and I hear Ray coming out of the bathroom talking to the manager saying "I really like the way Ty played these tunes" or something to that effect. Ray came out of the bathroom saw me and said, "I'm glad you heard that."

MD: How did you feel hearing that from Ray Manzarek?

TD: I thought, "This is going well, this is cool." When I was doing those rehearsals, I remember thinking how am I going to go in there? Should I kind of copy John Densmore, or should I try to copy my hero, Stewart Copeland? I knew I was able to copy Stewart pretty well because I was so into his playing. But I just remember telling myself, "I'm just going to do what I do and not get caught up in trying to be those guys." Ray really liked that I brought something different to the table.

MD: It all seemed to be falling in place for you. How did you seal the deal on getting the gig?

TD: I did the second rehearsal and then long story short; I got calls to sub on other things. I played on the *Craig Kilborn Show* and I also played a gig at the House of Blues in Hollywood. Then I got the call. They asked me if I would want to do the gig, the tour was starting, and they were leaving.

Alex Kluft

MD: During The Doors of the 21st Century tour, you got to play a lot of big places, especially in South America, right?

TD: Yes, we did. I did that gig from 2003 until Ray got sick in about 2012. We played all over Europe and even the Wembley arena. Then, we went to South America and played really big gigs all over the place. We went to a lot of places that the original Doors had never gone. There were fans of that music that never got to see Robby and Ray play live. It was quite an experience to go to South America, Mexico, Europe, Australia, and Japan.

MD: What was your favorite gig?

TD: The one that sticks out in my mind the most is a soccer stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was around 27,000 people. The fans were so excited that they couldn't contain themselves. When we were playing, they started throwing pieces of fence and chairs around, and people starting fires out in the audience. It wasn't because they were angry, it was because they were so excited.

MD: What's your favorite Doors song to play live?

TD: I still love to play "Riders on the Storm," and just getting into it behind the keyboard solo. There are different keyboard players that will play live with us now. They each do their own thing and it's fun because each player will go into a totally different direction. I also like to play "When the Music's Over" because that's another one that's never the same way twice. There's a lot of improvisation under Robby's guitar and he starts to really get blazing on it. I try to follow him on it and see where he's going to go.

MD: You must have certain skills to be able to keep a jam going?

TD: With my dad's influence, those records he showed me, and coming from the background I had, I was able to get in the head-space of where those guys were coming from. They love jazz! If I had just been a guy who wasn't experienced with jazz, didn't know how to play bossa nova beats or brushes, and didn't know how to swing… I could have never gotten a gig like that.

MD: How was the energy and chemistry different from playing with Ray and Robby to just playing with Robby?

TD: With Ray there were more surprises on stage. He tended to be more adventurous and spontaneous. Robby is very spontaneous in his playing, but Ray would occasionally just take a full-on left turn, which was really cool. Musically, sometimes it didn't work out, but that was okay. Together, their chemistry was really good. I felt very fortunate to be a fly on the wall, observe them playing together, and to be a part of it.

MD: Did you develop a personal relationship with Ray?

TD: Absolutely. Ray was a mentor to me in a lot of different ways. We would hang out a lot, I learned so much from him. You can hear how unique Ray's playing was, he didn't care what anybody thought. I learned so much playing with guys like him. He showed me the experimental side of playing. Sometimes you're going to go for different things, and sometimes you're not going to play them the same way. It may work, or it might not, and that's okay.

MD: Have you played with any other bands recently?

TD: Yes, I just recently started playing with Booker T. Jones. That's been a really great gig because Booker's original drummer was Al Jackson Jr. and I'm enjoying getting in that head-space and honoring that music.

MD: Does Booker T. know that you play with Robby?

TD: Yeah! Booker told me, "We should work up a version of "Light My Fire" or something… Maybe Robby could come out and play sometime."

MD: Did you tell Robby?

TD: I did! Robby was a fan when "Green Onions" came out, he was really into that tune.

MD: You can make it happen!

TD: Yeah, that'd be fun. I'm enjoying it. The Booker gig is super funky, and I get to play all these great Al Jackson parts. Booker is a gracious guy, just like Robby and Ray.

MD: Are you endorsed by any drum companies?

TD: Yes, I use DW Drums, Bosphorus Cymbals, Aquarian Drumheads, and Innovative Percussion Sticks.

Check out Ty's drummer profile page, at modern drummer.com

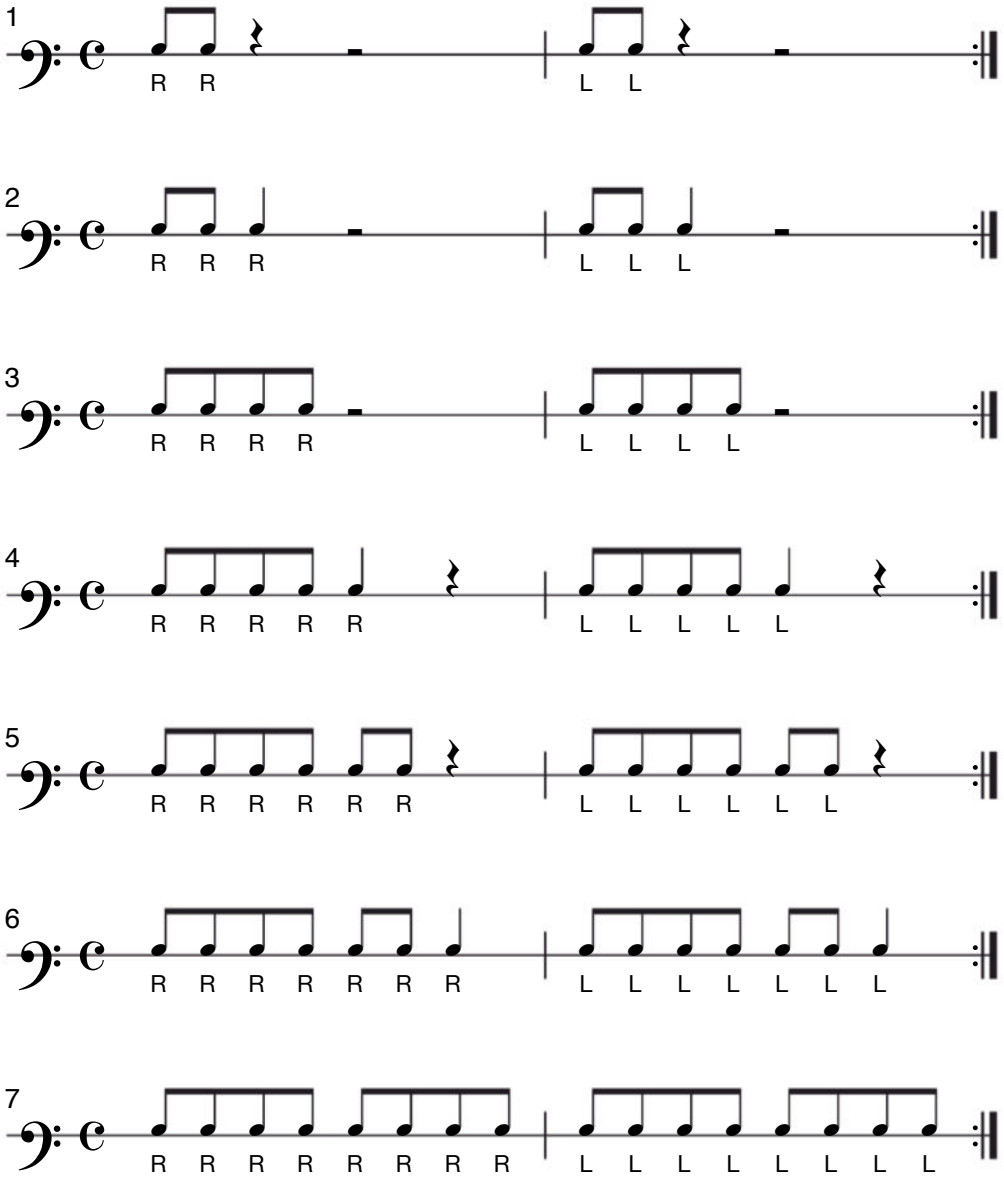
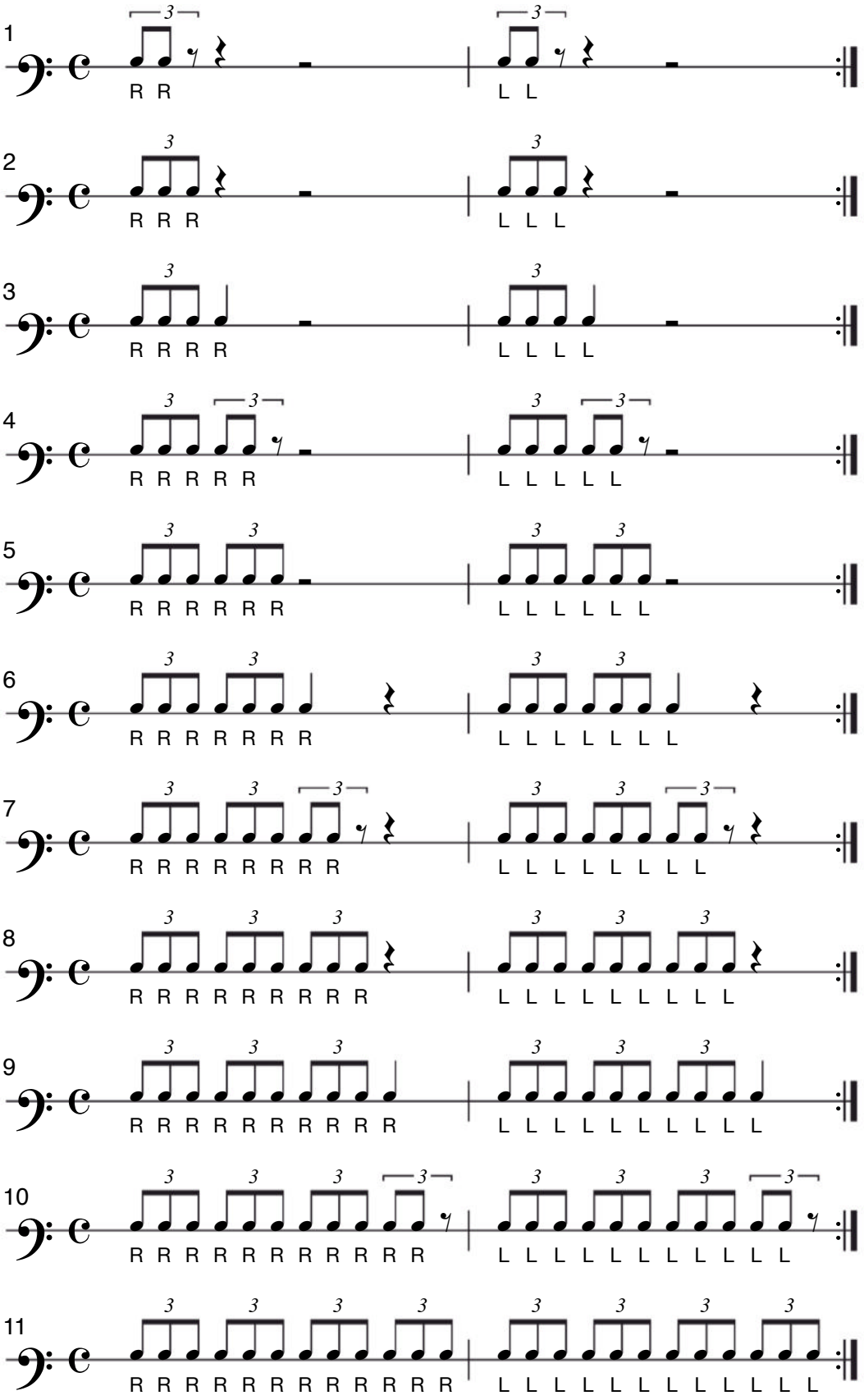
Joe Morello: Master Studies

In our further celebration of Joe Morello's legendary book *Master Studies*; in the next few months *Modern Drummer* will be bringing you one of the best and most beneficial sections of the book and Joe's teaching, the **Control Studies.** The part we are looking at this month talks about the **velocity** in which we strike the instrument. Remember relaxation one of the keys to control!

Control Studies: Velocity

The faster you play, the looser and more relaxed you have to be. In these exercises, you just need to drop the stick and then keep it going. Try to get your hand to follow the motion of the stick. To do this, basically, the first note is struck using the wrist, and the other notes are controlled by the fingers. The important thing is to free yourself from tension, because any tension will break the flow of energy.

Practice each line eight times, slowly at first. Never play faster than a speed at which you can play relaxed and cleanly.



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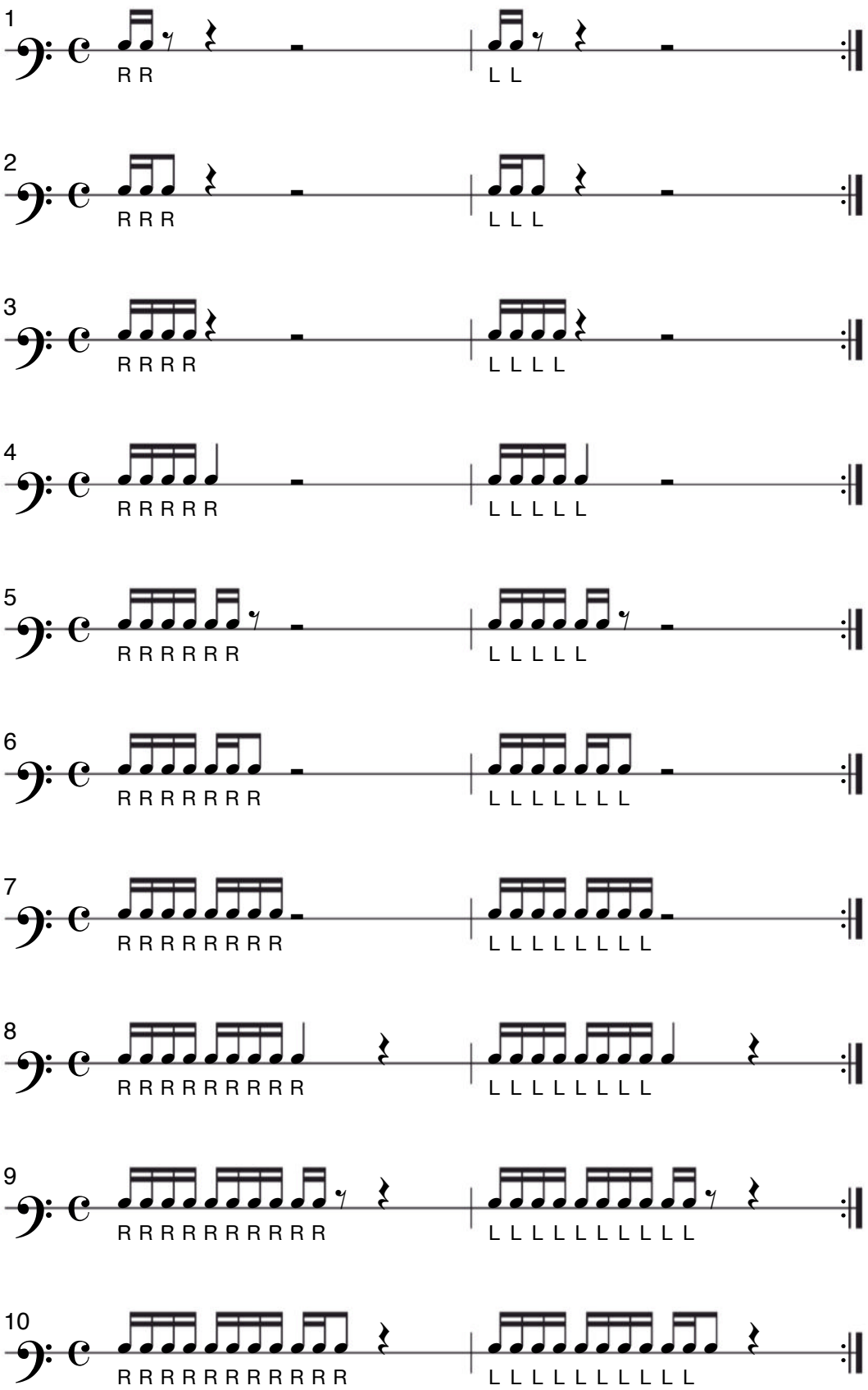
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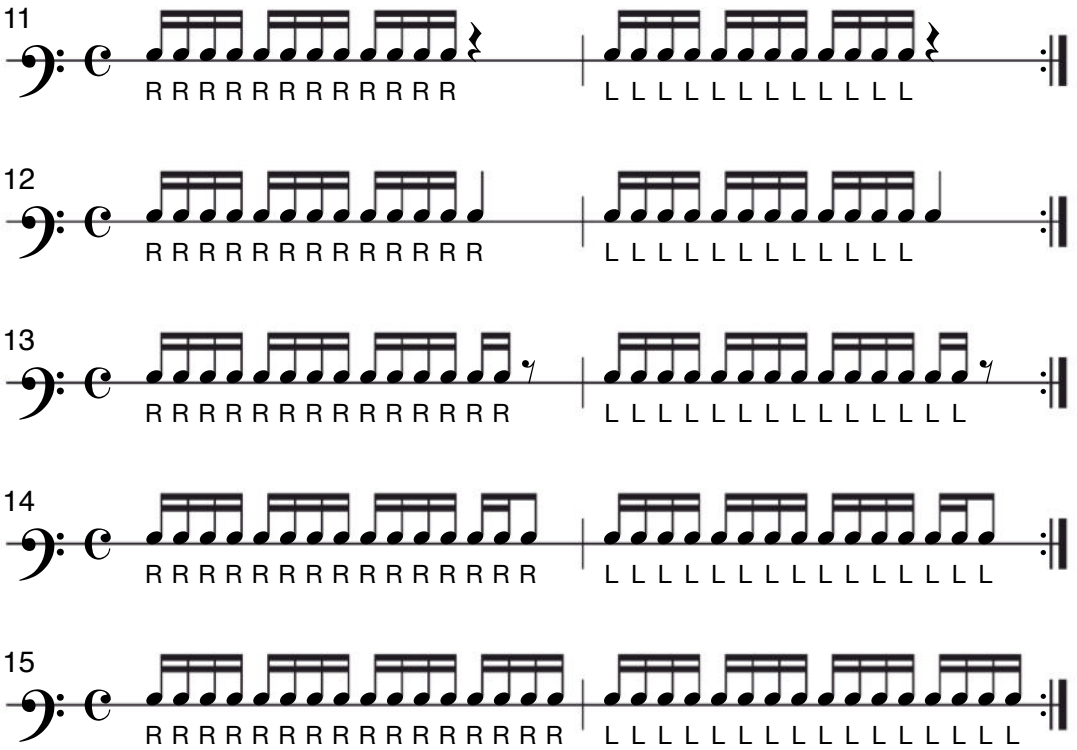
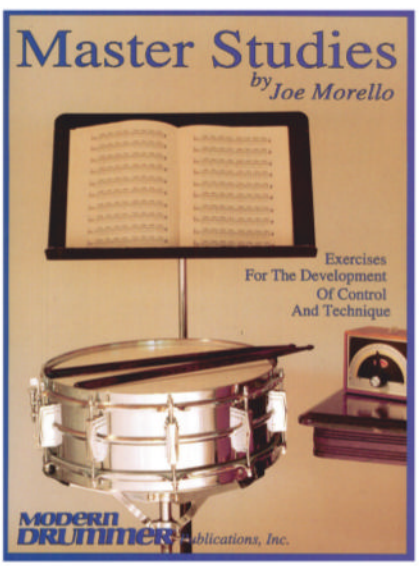
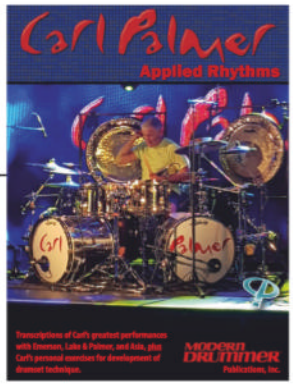



Check out Joe's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Master Studies* at moderndrummer.com

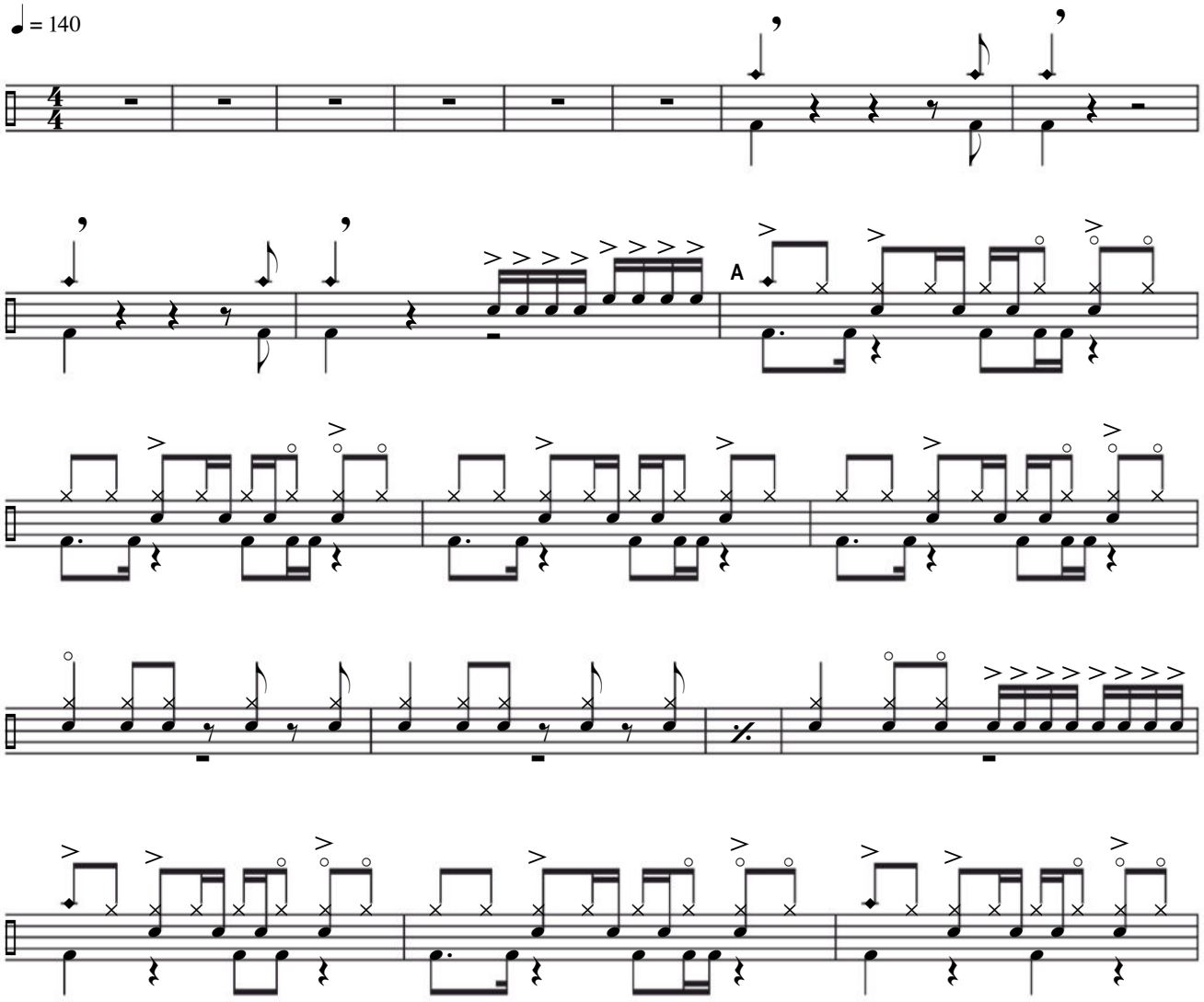
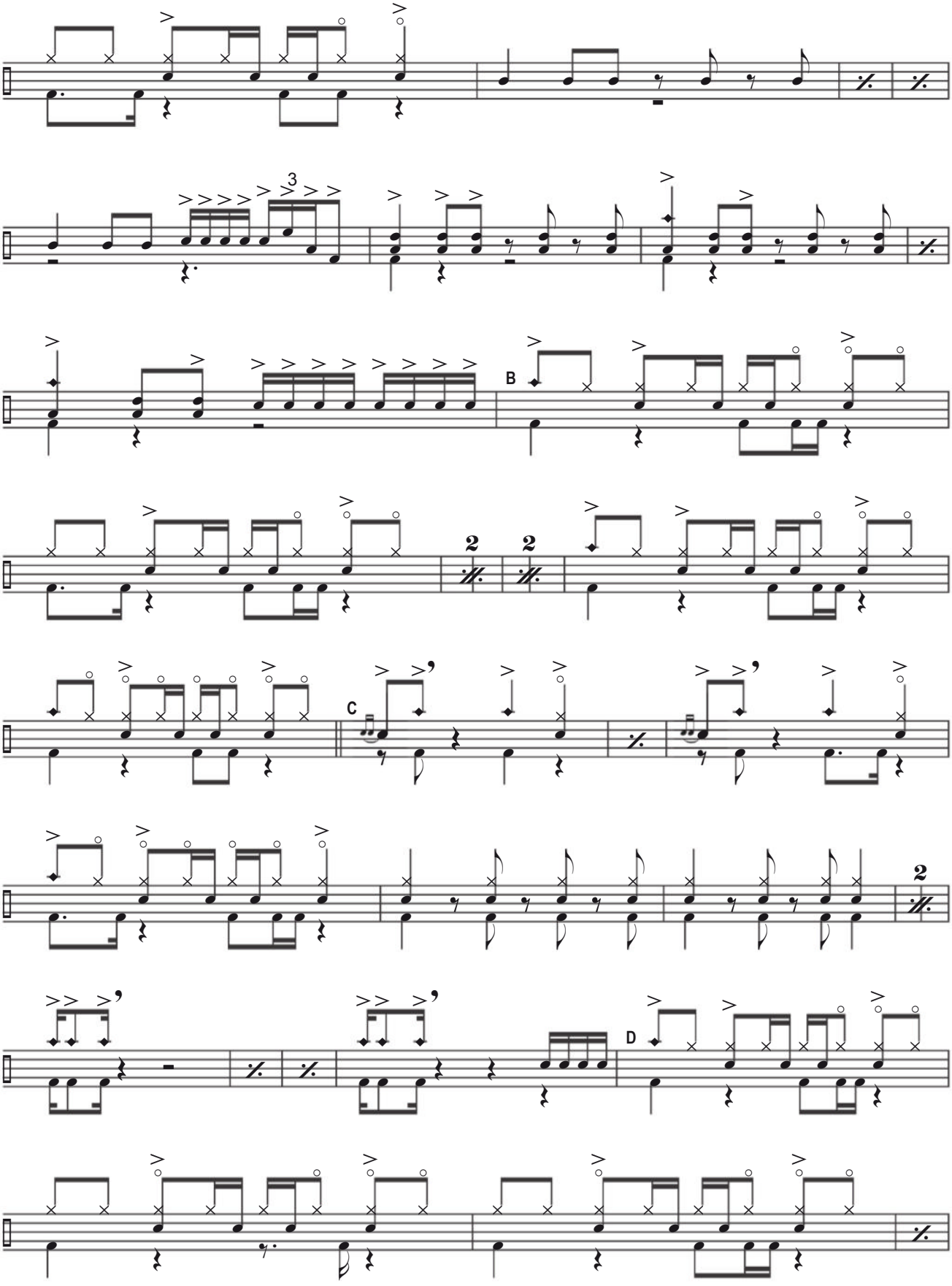
"Hoedown"

Emerson, Lake, & Palmer Trilogy, recorded in 1972

Reprinted from Carl Palmer's book *Applied Rhythms.*



This is one of my favorite instrumentals, probably one of the all-time great pieces of music I played with Emerson, Lake, & Palmer. Without a shadow of a doubt, it's one of my favorites and the only piece of music I've ever played by Aaron Copeland. I'm sure that I'll play this piece again in the future.

This part is basically lifted from the orchestral arrangement. I've adapted the percussion parts that the orchestra would have played as closely as I could put them on the drums. Four bars after letter C is a very typical Aaron Copeland brass sort of phrase. I play that one with the band (or with the orchestra, depending on which record you're listening to.) This is a very good drum part for the student to learn, because it is a little more diverse. It's not just for on the floor with a bass drum. There are some quite interesting accents that have to be played. They're unexpected, and they come in at strange times. But basically, it's 4/4 throughout, so there shouldn't be any problem with playing this one.

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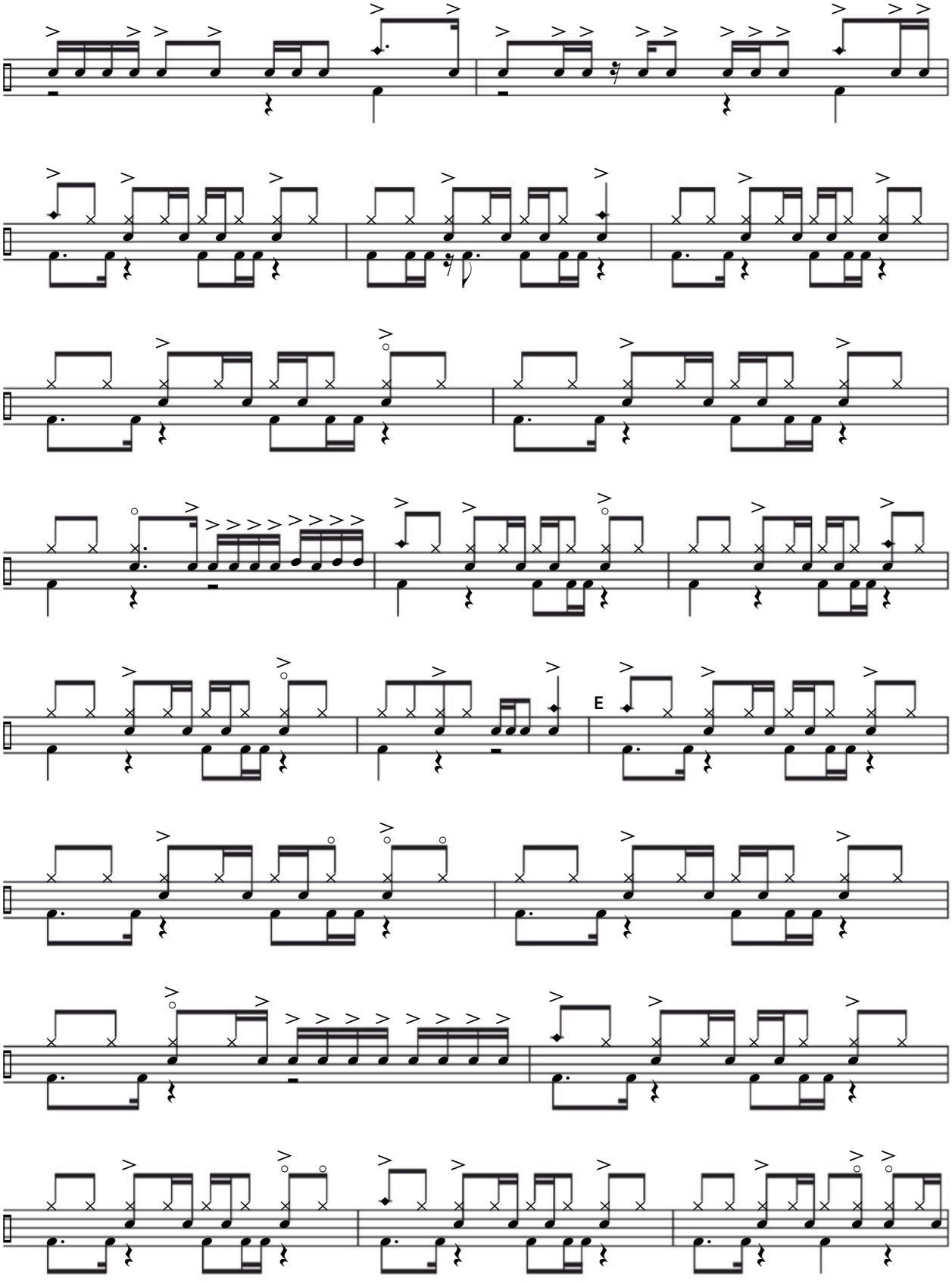
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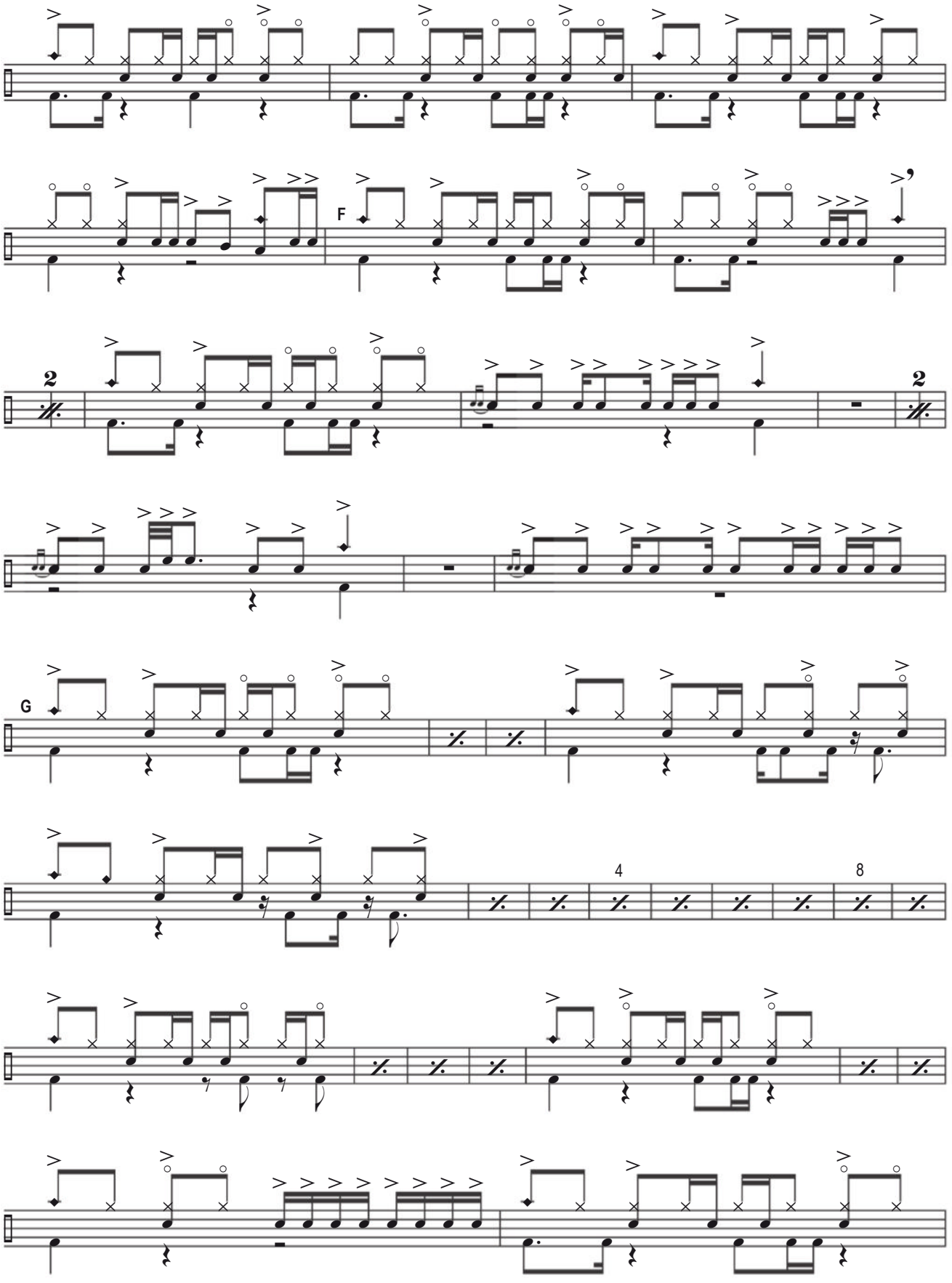
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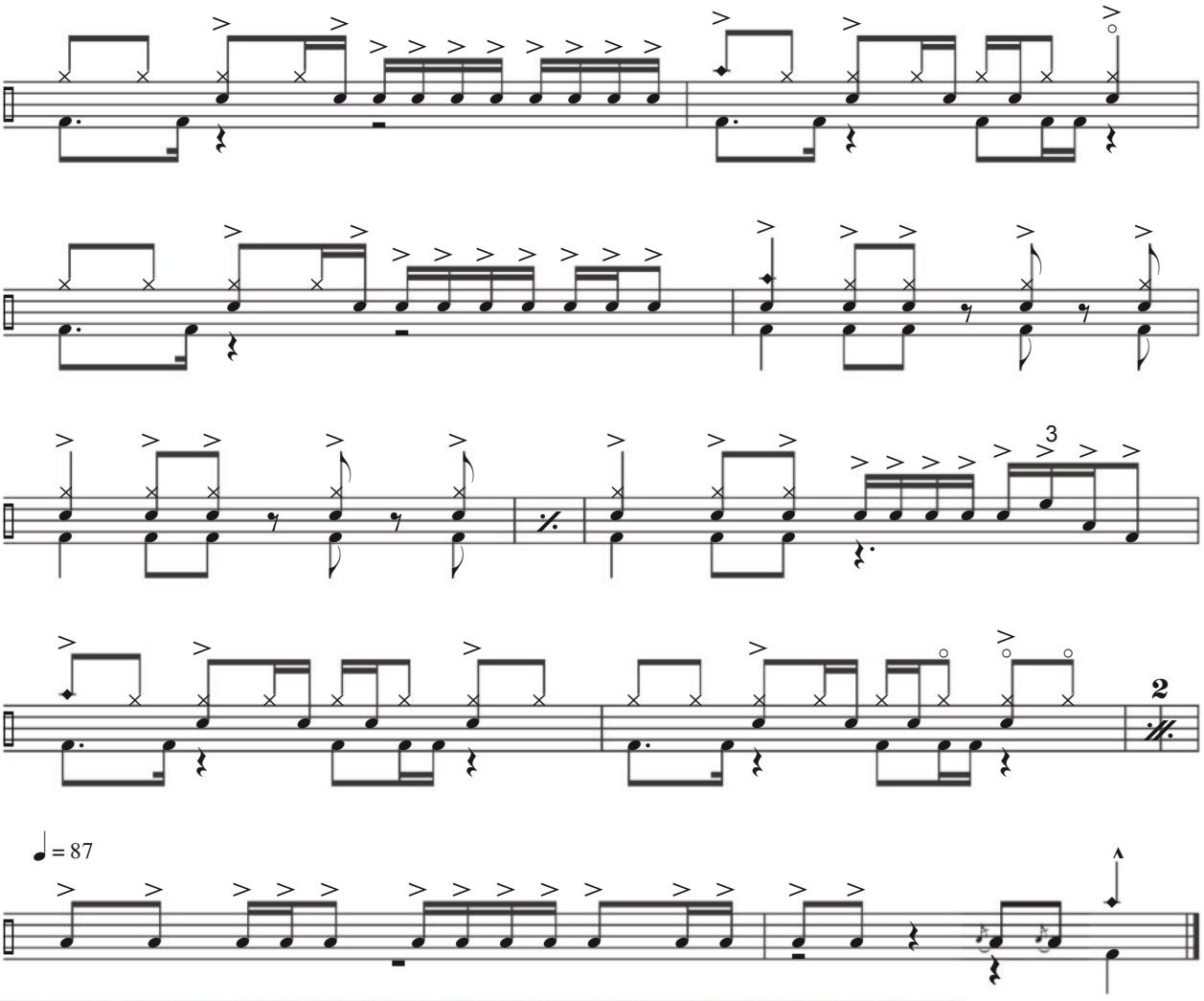
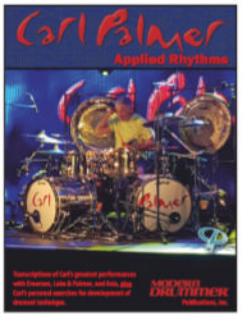



Check out Carl's *Modern Drummer* profile page and his book, *Applied Rhythms,* at moderndrummer.com

The Rhythm Of Practice

By Chris Lesso

Beats are something you do; drumming is something you live.

The drums don't want you to be good at them. The world will throw every excuse at you not to practice or play drums. We have all heard the excuses, 'Life gets in the way' and 'There's always something else to do.' If this game were easy, everyone would be a champion!

It's a daily challenge to step into the practice room and confront yourself. You are humbly confronting what you don't know, or what you can't do (yet). But we can turn this ritual of practice into the rhythm of practice. Consequently and over time, we'll unleash our best selves through drumming.

That magical day is not like winning the lottery, where we finally '*get it*' and when everything magically clicks into place. Instead, it's found in the stacking of hard won 1% gains. In this process we face days when we're either dazed, confused, or frustrated. Or all three at the same time. Then there are the days when we find the gift of one small victory. The slow drip of knowledge turned into action compounds over time and transforms you into the drumming super-hero you were meant to be.

The *LTR DRUMMING METHOD: LAUNCH* doesn't give you a forced practice regimen. Practice is a choice, one that should be fueled with enthusiasm, curiosity, and fun. Even though we can count on experiencing days when we just don't feel like practicing, we can still take swift and steady action to craft a clearer, bolder, and heartfelt message to the world.

Turning practice into a lifestyle gives us momentum. Once you start riding the momentum of good practice, you won't want to let it fade. Momentum is energy in motion. For example, a jet that soars above the clouds at 30,000 feet has serious momentum. In mid-air, a pilot can let the plane coast and momentum will allow it to stay in flight. But once that plane has landed and lost its momentum, it is dead weight. To regain flight the spark to escape inertia and create momentum has to be ignited all over again. This re-ignition demands massive amounts of energy. Losing your drumming and musical momentum creates the thoughts of giving up and quitting. You feel like that plane sitting still on the runway. On the other hand, progress, even if it's 1% each day, comes from using your momentum over time. This process can sometimes feel messy and like a fast track to nowhere. But the essence of organized practice is to use these obstacles as fuel for the journey forward. That journey is yours.

Drumming is fun but endlessly challenging. The rhythm of practice is where the rewards are earned and discovered. That's why we love it; we're playing an infinite game. Practicing shouldn't be a chore; it shouldn't become something you despise. Over time these feelings can only corrode the joy of why we started playing drums in the first place. To nurture this joy, we must keep the reason of why we play drums, front and center. We can use it as fuel to move us forward both on the days we can't wait to play *and* on those days when we'd rather do anything else.

Motivation is a myth. There's nothing in the world that will magically sit you behind the kit and force you to pick up your sticks. This motivation must come from the fire that burns within you. For this reason, practice can never be forced. We can only craft the motivational and practice conditions to build this ritual of discovery into a lifelong rhythm of practice. This habit is when we embrace the honor and thrill of turning our daily drumming workout into a lifestyle.

Feel the Wood in Your Hands Once a Day

Drumming icon Joe Morello has said this about practice, "Every day, I just want to feel the wood in my hands." It can't get any simpler than that! What a beautiful prescription for living a life filled with the joy of drumming. Tell yourself that once a day you'll feel the wood of the stick in the palm of your hand and commit to getting 1% better. We all start with that idea in our mind's eye. Channeling that creativity only happens when the drumset becomes your second home. That is when you'll get so comfortable with that '*wood in your hands*' feeling. That is when you can create an outpouring of expression and emotion *through* the drums. Creating the daily habit of practice moves us towards this wonderful feeling. Practice can take hours or take as little as 15 minutes. Feel the wood in your hands once a day, and just watch what unfolds.

I hope you've enjoyed this excerpt from my book, *THE LTR DRUMMING METHOD: LAUNCH*!

Next time we'll explore the four essential areas of my IREC practice model: Intuition, Reps, Edges, and Celebration. We'll also transform your practice space into a true practice dojo. You'll learn how to keep your momentum going on those days that you just can't seem to find the time, and learn tactics to keep practice fun (like it should be.) Drum with passion, and let's find YOUR voice through drumming together.

chrislesso.net/drum

Check out Chris's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

Double Bass Drumming

Soloing Over the Double Bass Roll

by Joe Franco

This month we will continue with another excerpt from Joe Franco's groundbreaking book, *Double Bass Drumming*. This month *Modern Drummer* is focusing on Joe's section on soloing over the double bass roll using accented rolls and accent patterns with the hands. These excersises and patterns are a fantastic way to develop different hand patterns and independence for soloing over the feet, and develop balance, control, and stamina in your double bass playing.

In this excerpt, various hand patterns are developed and played over the double bass drum roll. These patterns include accented rolls and their accent patterns, and mixed sticking patterns. This article deals specifically with the sixteenth note feel, and is designed to:

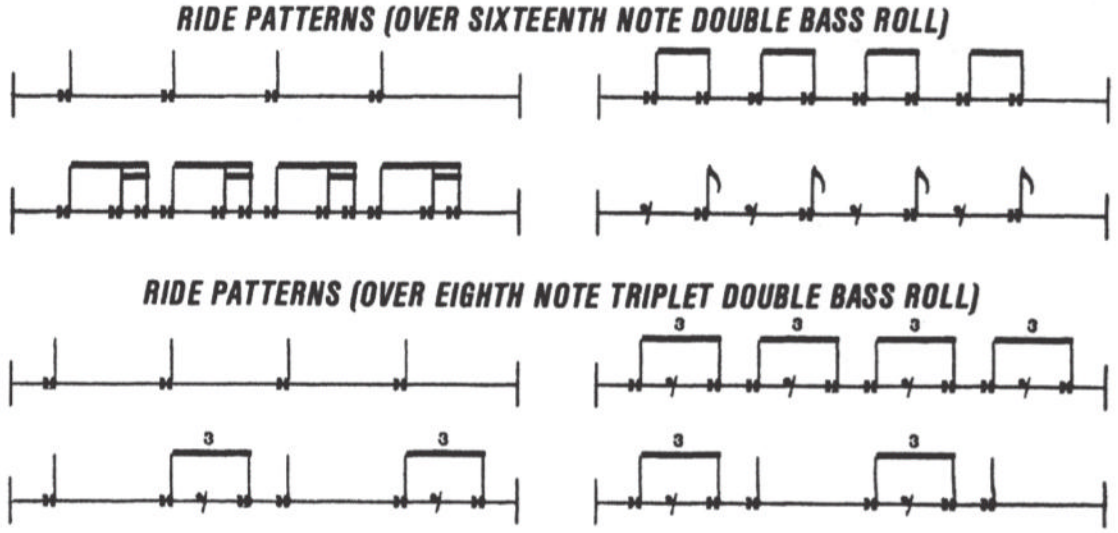
-Present different hand patterns that are useful in soloing.
-Develop hand independence over the double bass roll.
-Develop balance, control, and stamina on double bass.

When practicing this information first become familiar with each hand pattern. Repeat each pattern on the snare over the double bass roll until you are totally comfortable with it before moving on to the next. Keep in mind, when rolling with your hands and feet simultaneously, you should not hear any flamming. Once you are comfortable with the patterns, move them around the drums. Combine them with each other as solos of 4, 8, 16 or more measures. Playing these hand patterns as extended solos over the double bass roll will also increase your stamina on double bass.

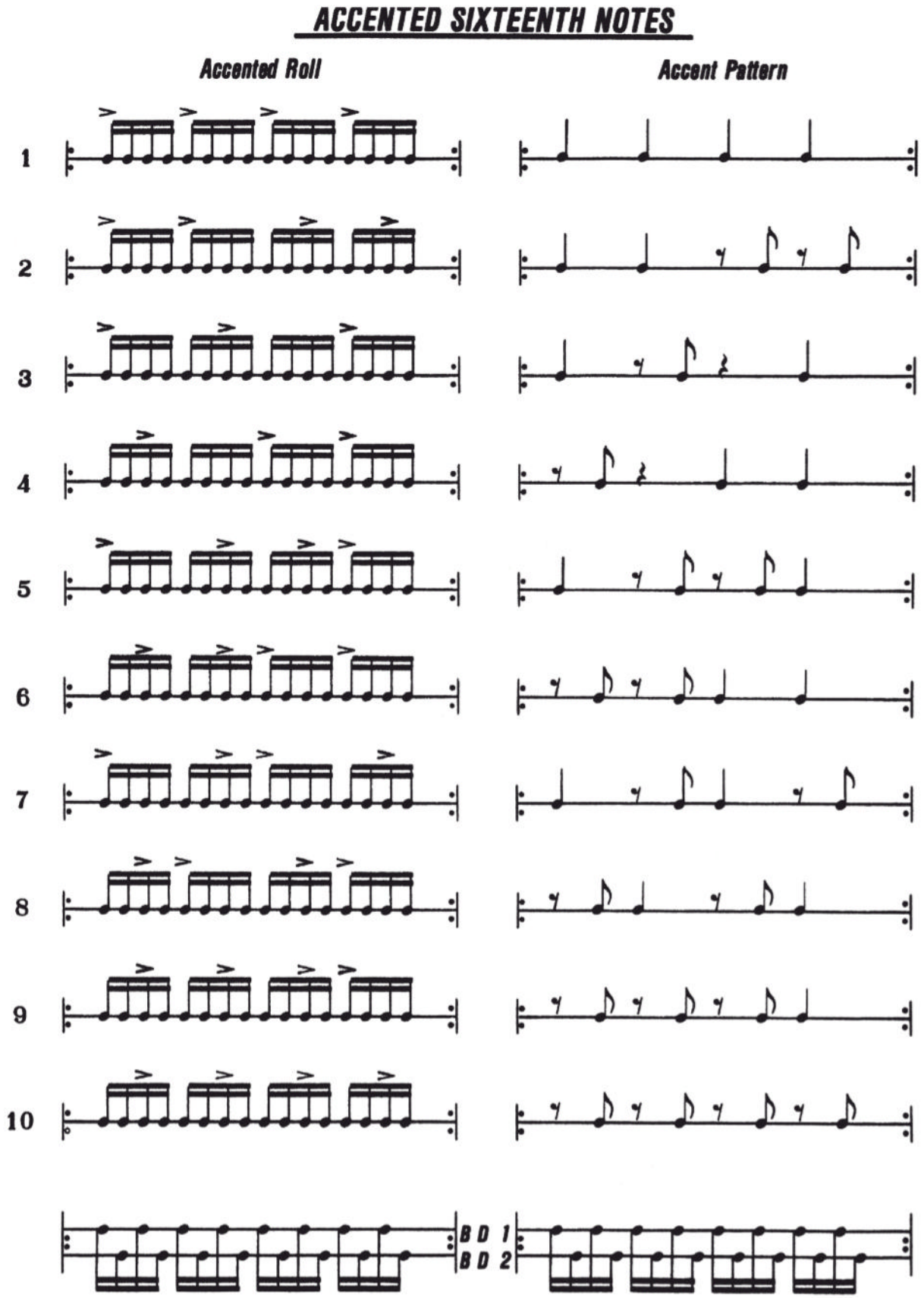
Accented Rolls and Accent Patterns

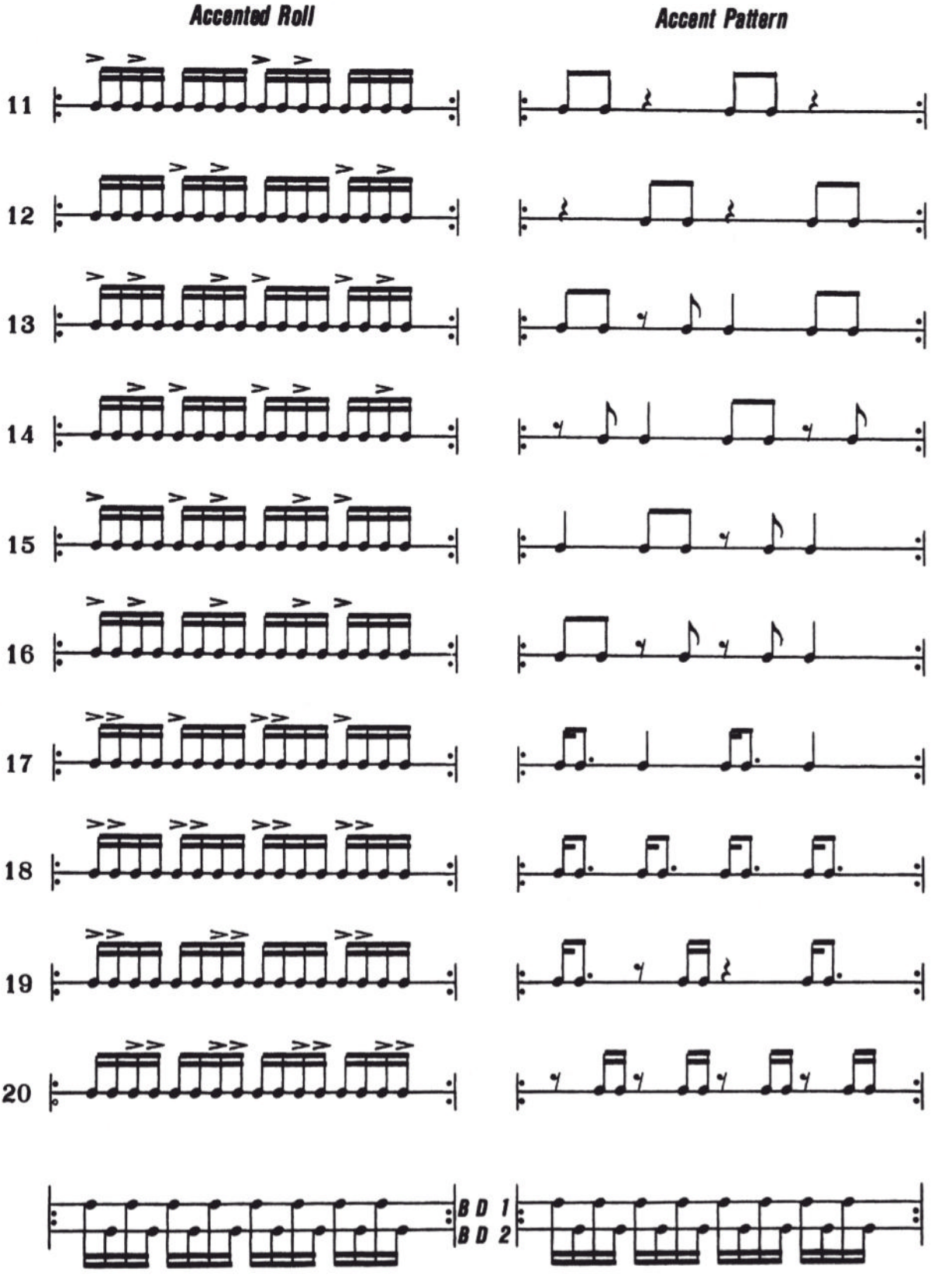
In the following sections and accented (single stroke) rolls (on the left column on each page,) and the accents (or syncopated patterns) of that roll (right column) of each page are played over the double bass roll. Accented rolls and accent patterns can be interpreted in many ways. Here are a few suggestions for playing this section:

-Play the accented roll on the snare using rim shots for all accents.
-Play the accented roll on anyone drum by playing the accents loud and the unaccented (ghost) notes soft.
-Play all the accents on toms and other parts of the kit while playing the unaccented notes on the snare.
-After playing the accented rolls, play only the accent pattern (right column of each page.) Break up the patterns between both hands. Try using the Single Stroke System for stickings, or experiment with other sticking methods. Keep in mind that playing the accent pattern over the double bass roll is not as easy as playing the continuous accented role. This will serve as a good balance and control exercise.
-Play the accent patterns with both hands simultaneously.
-To further develop your hand independence over the double bass roll, try playing the accent patterns on the snare with one hand, while playing one of the following ride patterns with the other.



In the following sections, the double bass roll is written only once on the bottom of each page. However, every hand pattern should be played over the double bass roll.

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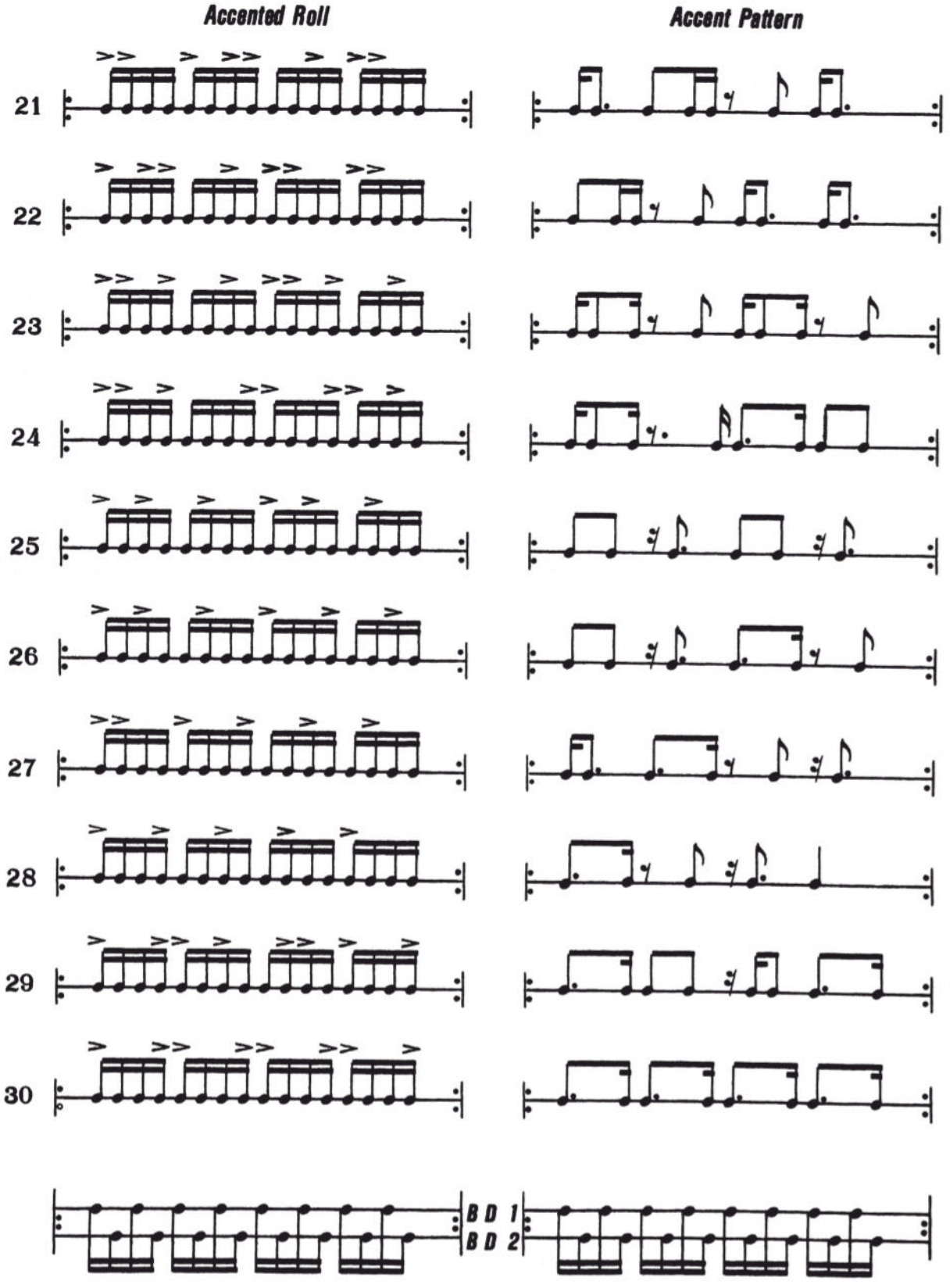
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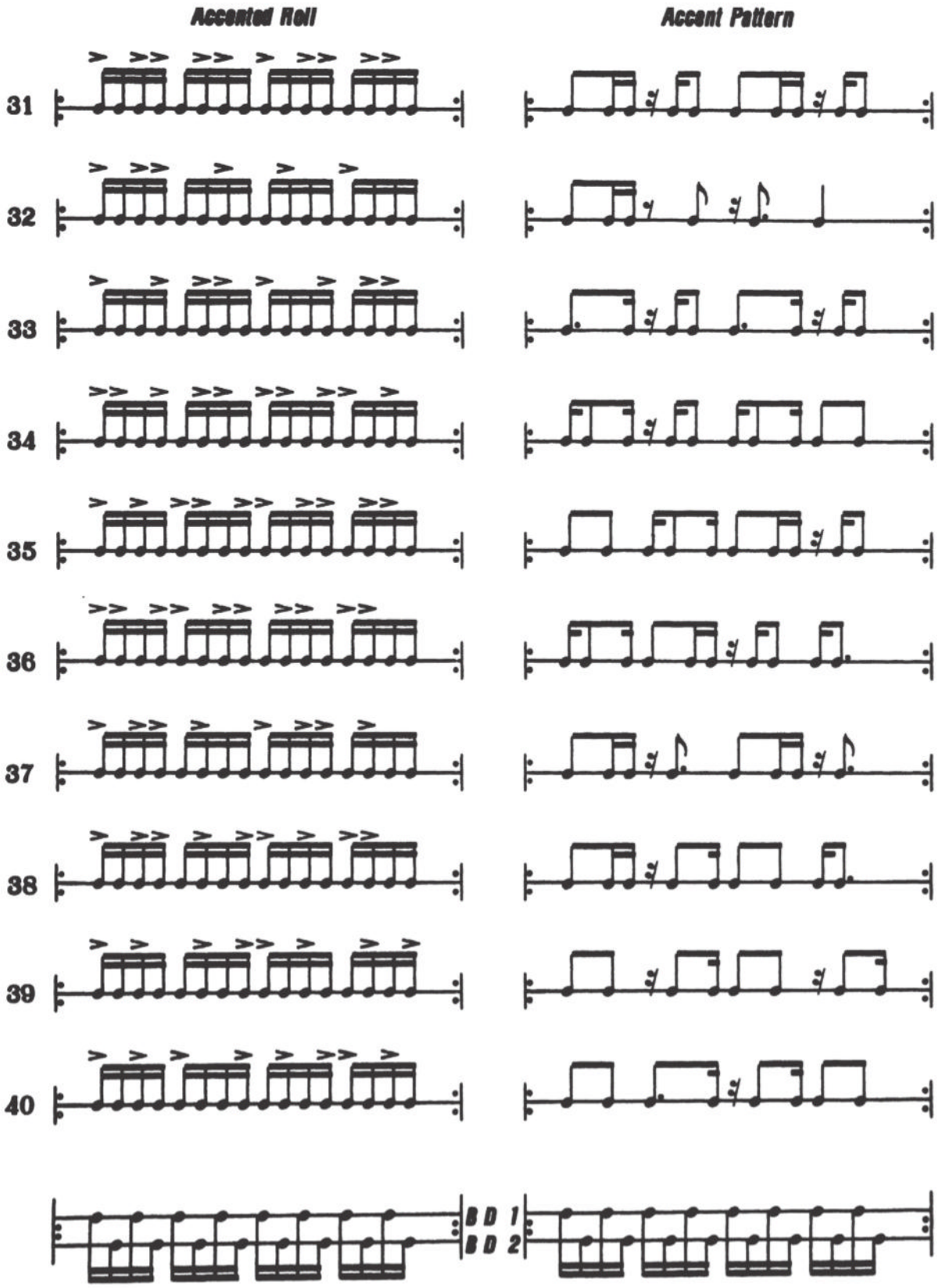
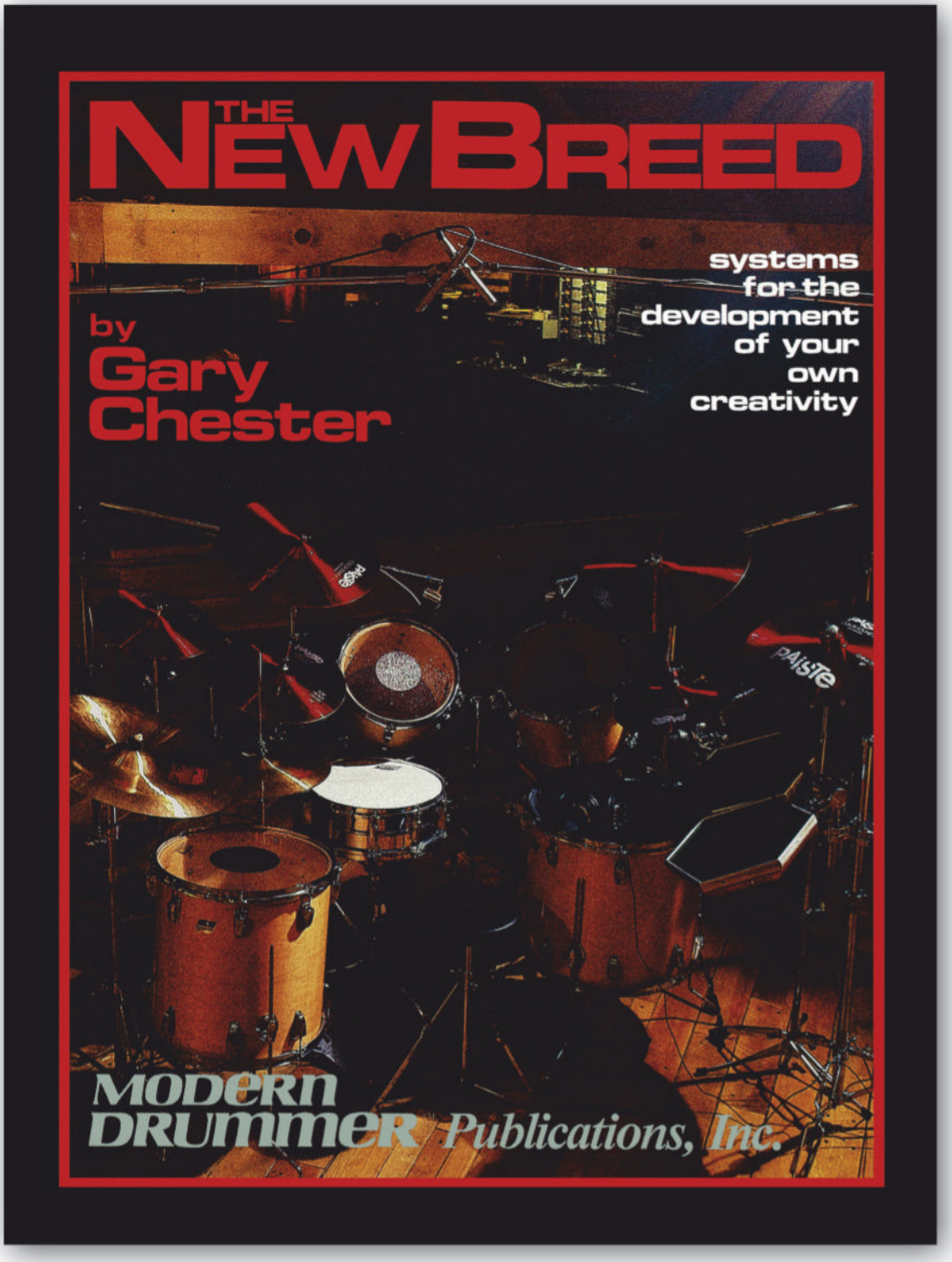


Check out Joe's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Double Bass Drumming* at moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER Media Presents:

Gary Chester's New Breed



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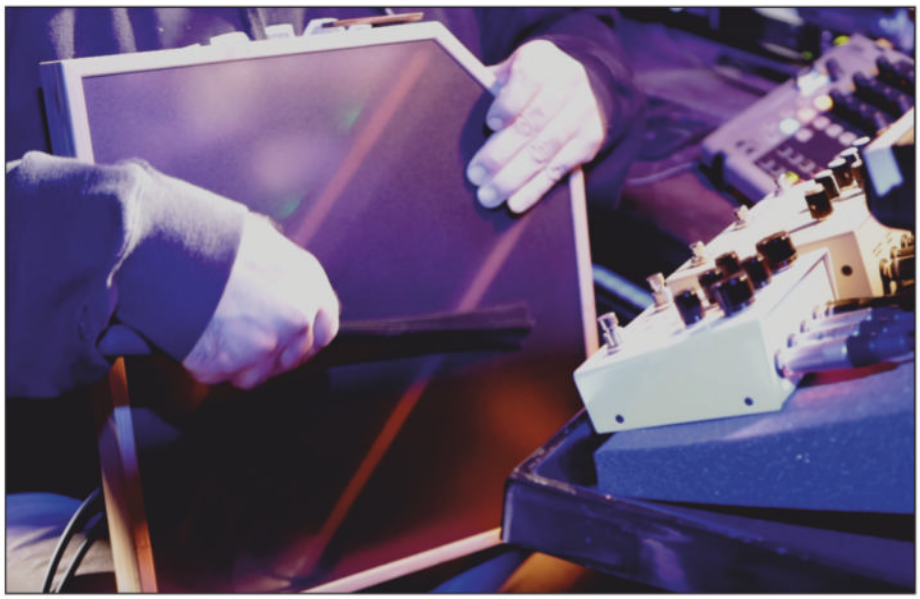
Hybrid Drumming / The Electro-Organic Approach

By Tony Verderosa

There are special moments in the musical instrument industry when instrument manufacturers produce some truly innovative products. These are risky ventures financially, but amazing things can happen when engineers and designers are given the time and resources to innovate and push the boundaries creatively. When lightning strikes, these new instruments inspire musicians to think differently about creating and performing music.

This month's column is a special nod to those inventors and entrepreneurs that are experimenting in garage workshops or those that already work as designers inside some of the top global music companies. We are all excited to see new combinations of technologies in the world of drumming and percussion over the coming years.

The most creatively satisfying electronic drum instruments that I have played in the past few years were designed around an "electro-organic" or "electro-acoustic" approach. Electro-acoustic drums serve a different purpose compared with more traditional electronic drum sets. For clarification, let me say that all electronic drums provide value, and function differently depending on their design. Let's look at a couple of different roles these instruments play, in the day to day life of drummers.



Functional / Supportive

Touring bands and recording artists have the need to "bring the studio to the stage". Drummers require electronic drum kits and/or multi-pad drum devices with lots of sample memory so we can trigger the exact samples from each drum as they were mixed in the studio for each song. What the audience hears on stage will sound exactly as it does on the big hit records. Butch Vig's latest tour with his band Garbage is a great example of why this solution is so important. He had to spend hours and hours in pre-production importing and mapping out uniquely compressed and processed drum and cymbal samples from his studio sessions right on to his Roland V-Drums. This is a critical and important solution that many drummers require. Electronic drum sets are also supportive because they function as "silent" practice kits for home use in addition having a huge role in drum set education.

Creative / Experimental

In this month's article I am highlighting instruments that are very different from the practical solutions described above. In the creative drumming community, we need inspiring electro-organic drum instruments that are imaginative and intuitive to play. We need new instruments that become integral to the creation of a new song during the composing and studio production process. In this case the objective is to design "unexpected" instruments that are at the forefront of the creative process and become part of the sound of modern music.

Lets look at it from this perspective, the new Roland SPD-SX Pro Sampling drum pad has 32GB of internal sample memory. That's 44 hours of 48kHz/16 bit stereo samples! The SPD-SX Pro was created to bring the world's most creative sounds on to the stage. To stand out and get people's attention, you will want to make sure that you are filling up that sample memory with unusual and groundbreaking sounds and song elements. If that is your goal, then you want to "up your game" as a music producer and sound designer. That is exactly why the world needs sounds and textures that have never been heard before. We need new ways of approaching instrument design. It's about the sound and feeling that a new instrument can provide. It's about *sparking inspiration.*

Think of the global influence that the Roland TB-303, TR-808 and 909 had on the Detroit techno sound and the emergence of Hip Hop music. Those instruments were created by Ikutaro Kakehashi, also known by his nickname Taro. He was a Japanese engineer, inventor, and entrepreneur. He founded the musical instrument manufacturers Ace Tone, Roland Corporation, and Boss Corporation, and the audiovisual electronics company, ATV Corporation. It's important to mention that the initial commercial release of the Roland TB-303, TR-808, and 909 was a failure. The drum sounds in the 808 and 909 were considered "not realistic", and yhe TB-303 had "unrealistic" bass sounds. Eventually electronic music became more mainstream, and all of these instruments and sounds became iconic. These "unrealistic sounds" became THE sound of modern music.

If I had the leading engineers from the world's biggest music companies in an elevator and just ten seconds to get my point across, I would say the following, "Hey - we need new instruments that offer their own unique musical sounds. They should have a highly expressive, natural playing feel that is almost identical to playing an acoustic drum or hand drum. Can you design something that straddles the line between acoustic and electronic drums?" It is vital for the industry to have designers working closely with engineers and music artists to come up with completely new concepts.

Electro-Organic Experiments

Let's have a look at some unusual instruments that were released over the past few years that utilize features you typically won't find in today's electronic drum systems. Over the next decade, we will witness new concepts in the field of digital drum design that blur the lines between "acoustic and electronic". This will be the new frontier.

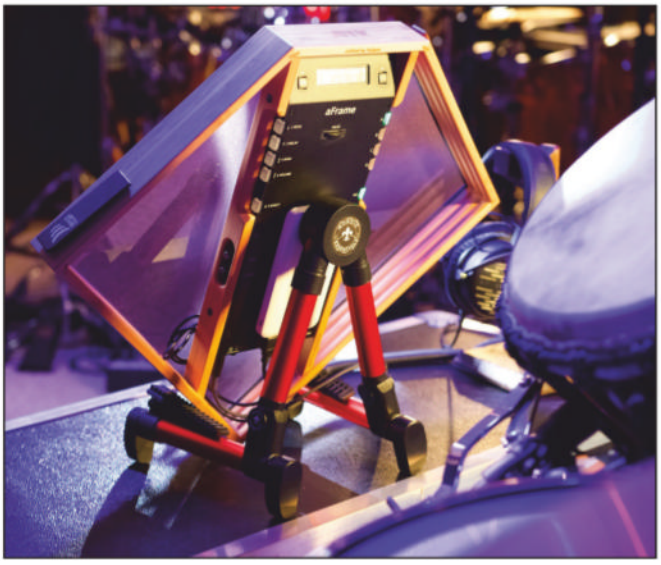
Hybrid drumming requires a "DIY" approach and lots of patience. Creative hybrid drummers are pushed into a corner because we have no choice but to build our very own individualized, "electro-organic" set ups using triggers, pads, pedals, Ableton live, fx pedals and much more. Everyone is approaching hybrid drumming differently, but there is a common thread. The common element is the "*creative merger of electronic and acoustic sounds*".

My own personal set up involves a maxed out 27" iMac Pro, audio interfaces, 16 channels of Class A mic pre-amps, a collection of amazing microphones, hardware synthesizers, a DAW (Cubase Pro), dozens of VST virtual instruments, a Midi Drum Controller, acoustic drum triggers, numerous drum pads, acoustic drums, acoustic cymbals, an array of unusual hardware FX Pedals, and much more. It is an insane amount of effort to get all of these drums and triggers to respond and behave exactly as I want them to. The complexity of my hybrid system helped me appreciate a compact new electronic drum that I bought a few years ago from Sweetwater. It's called the **aFrame** and it is made by ATV.

Here is a quick experiment I recorded with the aFrame drum that explores one the electro-organic preset patches. There are many banks of presets that explore different categories of sound. There are banks that explore "Acoustic" sounds and various acoustic textures. There is a bank of sounds called "Neo-Acoustic" that explores the "electro-organic" character of the aFrame. There is another bank of sounds that explores deeply electronic tones but offers the same playing experience as acoustic instruments. The track that I made in the video below fits into that "electronic" category. Its foundation is a deep synth bass tone, but at times it behaves like a super touch sensitive 32" concert bass drum that responds to the smallest finger tap. I am also changing the pitch of the "drum" by squeezing the playing surface which activates pressure sensors. There is a ton of distortion used on this example. By merely touching the edges of the frame, I can achieve some subtle nuance and strange overtones. Around the 2:20 mark, I started to explore aggressive finger nail scraping on the textured playing surface.

The aFrame is marketed more toward percussionists, but it's a drum synthesizer and can be enjoyed anyone that wants to play rhythms and experiment with sound design. If you don't have ANY hand drumming skills, you will create some really cool ideas with this drum. If you have a background in Latin percussion, Arabic drumming, and Indian drumming, you will also feel very much at home. The aFrame was developed by Mr. Tsukasa Arakawa, who is a producer at the R&D Department of ATV's Matsumoto Laboratory in conjunction with Mr. Ikuo Kakehashi, the aFrame development advisor and noted Japanese percussionist.

The aFrame is a "microcosm" of this big sonic universe I built with



my hybrid drum system. That's part of the appeal for me. I can plug in a pair of headphones and get lost for hours with this instrument. It has all of the elements I need to explore drumming, composition, music production, and sound design in one lightweight drum. The frame of the drum is made from Bamboo by a very prominent Japanese company, Fujigen. Fujigen specializes in wood components for guitars as well as ultra-high-end wood designs for Luxury cars.

The aFrame drum has its own built-in microphones, onboard synth, built in DSP effects processing/mixing and pressure sensors. It works by taking the individual drum strikes that you make with your hands and fingers, and using these acoustic elements to interact with the DSP "band-pass" filters to create very unique sounds and textures. I love the fact that the first part of the signal chain on this drum is your touch. ATV uses a proprietary "Adaptive Timbre Technology" that responds to your playing technique, accommodating all manner of striking, pressing, scraping and friction.

I find that using a battery pack connected to the aFrame drum gives me more flexibility and more mobility. The drum does come with its own power supply but I prefer the battery pack which I secure to the drum using velcro.

The aFrame has the immediacy and visceral response of a real drum. It also offers musical scales and chords that I can create by triggering the internal DSP synth. There's also lots of onboard effects such as delays, reverbs, compression and more. The ATV aFrame provides an array of scales and arpeggios, such as Minor scales, Major Scales, Pentatonic Scales, Arabic, Lydian, Mixolydian scales and so on. The melodic scale functions can be controlled by pressure! **You can see in this video example,** I am pressing my fingers into the drum to change up the notes in a given scale. You can also control the panning position of different timbres according to the pressure you apply to the head.

Notice the MultiClap I attached to the frame of the drum. That small wooden device from Schlagwerk provides some additional overtones for me to explore while improvising. Keep in mind that if I am in a writing session with a guitar player or trumpet player, and they decide it would be more comfortable playing in the key of D, I just need to press a couple of buttons and store that edit change.

The aFrame has a familiar feel with an immediate response because it allows me to use simple hand motions to bend or dampen notes. The aFrame can also accommodate extremely subtle playing nuances like scraping brushes, mallets or hands/fingertips across the textured playing surface. It can even capture subtle finger tapping or the scraping of fingernails across the surface. The poly carbonate playing surface is pressure sensitive and responds like a real acoustic drumhead, conga or frame drum. But at the same time, it's also electronic. I have included some photos that provide a good view of the textured playing surface.

The aFrame has a sound engine and physical playing surface that is fully integrated into one lightweight drum frame. If you push your hand into the drum or press your fingers into the playing surface, it will change the pitch of the drums and sounds in much the same way as pushing on an acoustic conga, floor tom or large frame drum. The aFrame gives me that immediate sense of familiarity as a drummer/percussionist but it's also full of surprises because the DSP electronic tones are blended and integrated so seamlessly. Latency is a non-issue because this drum is not based on midi. By dampening the drum, you can affect the decay of some of the sounds and affect how the delays and reverbs react. **Here is another video example** where you can see my left hand is dampening the sound of the drum as I play the grooves. I am using an Innovative Percussion BR5 plastic brush to generate some swirling, fluttering overtones. As the brush is sweeping across the playing surface, my left hand is "pushing into the drum" to change the pitch.

The aFrame pushes the boundaries creatively and merges the world of acoustic percussion with electronic synthesis and digital signal processing. It's stands alone in a new category.

Here is a quote from Master percussionist, Pete Lockett on the ATV aFrame:
"The closest electronic percussion instrument that I've come across that feels like I'm playing an actual acoustic percussion instrument. I never thought that day would come to be quite honest. It feels like such a natural thing to play."

ATV aFrame Presets

It is worth having a look at a couple of the aFrame Presets from their reference manual because the descriptions indicate the ambitions for this instrument in greater detail. Here are a few few of the presets and what they "do."

HocusPocus

"An exotic synthesized sound is mapped to an Arabic scale. Pressure

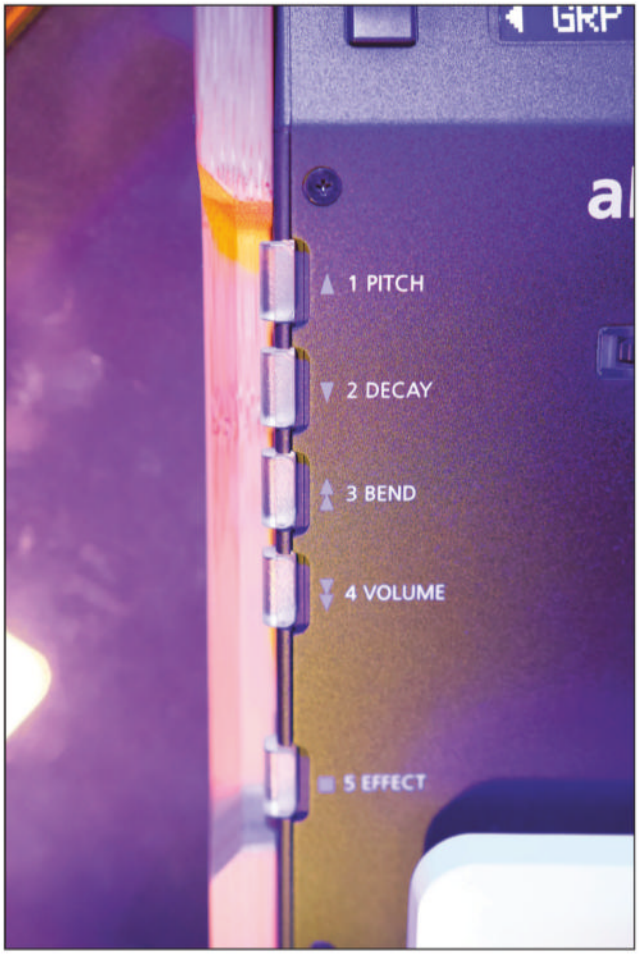
scale control articulates expressive melodic cascades and also widens the stereo pan image of the sounds enriched with reverb." I used the HocusPocus preset for the music on **this video below.** I love that I can explore creating film score music with one drum. Around the one-minute mark, you can see I am clearing pressing my fingers into the head in order to melodically glide up and down the Arabic Music scale.

BassOnBoard

This is a bass sound in which pressure bends the octave up. The sub-timbre is used to produce a subtle attack. It's simple parameter settings leave room to create more complex sounds.

Hyper Pot

This tone utilizes a timbre balance that responds to both the center and edge sensor, providing different characters depending on the location of the strike. With these settings, pressure mutes only the low frequency sound.



Psycho Skin

While this is a sound that does not exist in the acoustic world, you can obtain a nuanced performance by scratching and pressing the instrument.

In **this video example called "Chordal Nimbus",** I am again using the BR5 Brush to explore different textures on the aFrame. The melodic scale in this example is much more randomly generated. I am activating the scales using pressure with the fingers on my left hand. You will also notice a big shift in timbre as I switch from the brush side of the BR5 to the rubber handle. This track has a cinematic, expansive sound. I have always been inspired by the melodic and harmonic potential of electronic percussion since the earliest days of Simmons drums and the Yamaha DTS70 interface. It's really great to see ATV embrace these musical modes in the design of the aFrame.

A Related Cousin

The aFrame drum is unlike anything else I have ever played, with the exception of a Korg Wavedrum. The Korg WaveDrum is definitely a "cousin" to the ATV aFrame in some respects. The Wavedrum first came out in 1994 and it has been updated and refreshed a few times in the past 10 years. The Wavedrum could also articulate subtle brush strokes, hand scrapes, muting and dampening.

Market Impact

Have these new "electro-acoustic" drum instruments taken the world by storm? Are they widely adopted by drummers with millions of units sold every year? *Absolutely not*. Do they push the boundaries in terms of expressive control and give us a glimpse of what the future of electronic percussion could be? The answer is *definitely yes*. The creative potential is massive. I hope we see future iterations of the aFrame. The playing experience is really gratifying because it's more closely aligned with acoustic drumming and acoustic percussion.

The Future of Electro-Acoustic Drums

I hope that this electro-organic approach does become more prominent and more advanced over the coming years. It is interesting that many electronic drum companies have started embedding their electronic drum pads inside real acoustic drum shells. That appears to be more about aesthetics and appearances on stage. I am sure this trend is also helping more acoustic drummers warm up to the idea of playing electronic drums. With a true electro-acoustic design, the drum shell, rim, tension rods and tunable playing surface would all have an impact on the final sound of the instrument. It is not difficult to imagine a seamless merger that combines the nuance of acoustic drums with advanced synthesis, sound processing, and sound amplification technologies. Buying a drum set in 10 years will be a very different experience than what it is today.

With advancements in technology and technology becoming more affordable, you will be able to switch back and forth between a natural acoustic drum or flip a switch and the entire kit becomes a hybrid electronic system. Your "acoustic drums" will have no problem communicating with computers and recording technologies will be fully integrated.

To conclude, let's take a look at some of the groundbreaking instruments that shaped modern music over the past 50 years. There is a museum exhibit in Berlin called *Good Vibrations - History of Electronic Music Instruments.* Google Arts and Culture has also put together a wonderful story dedicated to these pioneering instruments. Bookmark **this link** and check it out.

Below are just some of the classic synths and samplers mentioned in this story. They all introduced new technology that changed the sound of recorded music forever. As musicians, there is no greater feeling than discovering a new, groundbreaking instrument for the first time. For instrument designers and engineers, I am sure the feeling is similar when you create a project or an instrument that literally changes the course of music history.

Fairlight

The first purpose-built digital sampling instrument was the Fairlight Computer Music Instrument, created in 1979. Using microprocessors, the Fairlight was able to shift the pitch of sampled digital sounds better than any other system on the market. It was used on global hit songs produced by Kate Bush, Herbie Hancock,

Peter Gabriel as well as numerous soundtracks and TV commercials.

Moog Modular

The Moog Modular was comprised of a series of individual components that produced or processed sound in various ways, it was connected by patch cables to create different configurations of sound. This was the first synthesizer to have a significant impact on pop music in the 1960s. It connected waveform oscillators, filters, and modulators and became the blueprint for modular synthesis as we know it today.

Buchla Music Easel

Don Buchla designed synthesizers that were free of conventional musical rules. His Music Easel was controlled by metal plates, optical sensors, and randomizable sequencers.

Synclavier

The Synclavier (Released in 1977) was the first synth to make additive and FM synthesis available outside of a research laboratory. By connecting a computer, synthesists and sound designers could program sounds using just a few lines of code.

LinnDrum

Roger Linn's drum machine was released in the early 1980s. It used samples of real drums and percussion instruments. This was in stark contrast to the early rhythm machines that preceded it. Those "rhythm machines" utilized synthetic, unrealistic, and synthesized drum sounds. The buzz at the time of the Linndrum was that it would eventually replace human drummers in the recording studio.

Roland 303, 808, and 909

As I mentioned at the start of this article, sometimes new instrument designs can be financially very risky for a manufacturer. When it was first introduced by Japan's Roland Corporation in 1981, the 303, 808 and 909 had terrible sales numbers. They were considered to be a complete failure. However, in time this series of instruments went on to change the sound of popular music.

Yamaha DX7

In 1983 Yamaha's DX7 went on to become one of the best-selling synthesizers of all time, selling more than 200,000 units. With the DX-7, Digital FM synthesis became available to the masses. The DX7 excelled at creating otherworldly, inharmonic, and glassy tones that analog synthesizers could not replicate. The DX-7 can be heard on records by everyone from Chick Corea to Michael Jackson, and from A-ha and Kool & The Gang to Whitney Houston and Phil Collins.

E-MU SP-1200

In the late 1980s, the SP-1200 offered sampling and sequencing capabilities in a portable design. It gave home based producers the ability to bypass expensive commercial studios. "Sampling" was widely adopted at this time for creating beats and full music tracks. The SP-1200 featured separate outputs, robust MIDI, and an onboard sequencer.

Simmons Drums

Originally, Simmons was a pioneering British manufacturer of electronic drums. Founded in 1978 by Dave Simmons, it created electronic kits from 1980 to 1994. The drums' signature electronic sound can be found on countless albums from the 1980s. I briefly owned a Simmons midi controller. As a midi percussion controller, it was way ahead of its time.

Roland TD7

The Roland TD7 Drum Kit was introduced in 1992-1993 using a special video production by CPP Media. This drum set had a big impact on the market and utilized round rubber pads for both the drum sounds and the cymbal sounds. It helped foster a much wider adoption of digital electronic drum sets. The sampled sounds were convincing and realistic and created a foundation for the continued success of Roland electronic drums.

Yamaha DTS70

This instrument was designed more for acoustic drum triggering and hybrid drumming. It was very forward thinking in its design and musical flexibility, but it also required that each drummer purchase their own synths and drum sound modules to produce music from pads and triggers. There were no internal sounds in this module. The DTS70 paved the way for today's popular hybrid drumming styles where drummers incorporate triggers and a few drum pads into their set up to blend acoustic and electronic sounds. **Here are a couple of examples** of how I used the DTS70 in my hybrid set up over 30 years ago. This instrument excelled at offering access to chordal harmonies and melodies if you decided to program these elements on each drum.

Yamaha's DTX900 Module

The more "current" version of the DTS70 is Yamaha's DTX900 Module, which was introduced in 2010. I use this module to this day because the midi triggering offers me the most creative flexibility of any modules currently on the market. I have all of the volume sliders turned OFF since I design all my own sounds and samples inside my external synths and computer-based instruments. Every sound you are hearing in **this track** is triggered in real-time.

I am excited about the evolution of electronic drums and the future of hybrid drumming! Be sure to check out **these videos** below with Pete Lockett discussing and performing on the ATV aFrame. See you next month!

Check out Tony's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

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1936 Leedy Century "Full Dress" Trap Set with original Painted Dutch Windmill Scene

By Tim Northup

The Northup Drums Museum loves to acquire what we call "Time Capsule Kits." That is what we call a drumset that started its instrumental life purchased all together at the same time. Over the years, any kit may have pieces added, but a "Time Capsule Kit" is all original, not a set that was "put together" over time.

This 1936 Leedy Century "Full Dress" Trap Set with original Painted Dutch Windmill Scene is a perfect "Time Capsule Kit." It was purchased in Gold Sparkle in 1936. This specific set was only made from 1934 to 1938. The snare drum is a 5x14 Broadway Standard, the bass drum is a single tension 14x28 with the Dutch Windmill Scene. The painted Dutch Windmill Scene was offered as an option for an extra $10.00 from 1925 to 1940. This scene seems to be one of the most common of the Leedy oil painted scenes that you could add to your bass drum. The bass drum also has a light kit inside to illuminate the artwork on the front head.

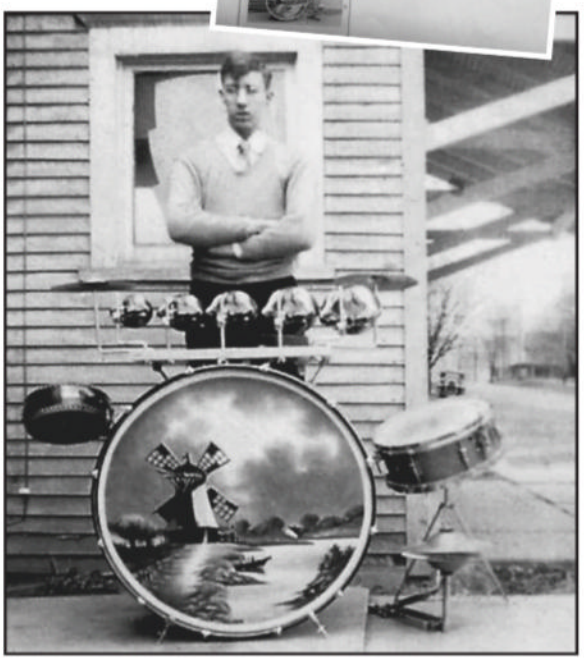
The set was purchased with a lowboy sock cymbal, trap table with five Korean temple blocks, two 9" Chinese toms, two larger Chinese floor toms, Zilco and Zejian thin splash cymbals, a wood block, cowbell, and a bass drum pedal equipped with a cymbal clanger. We even have the original sticks, brushes, and trap case that were purchased with the set.

The museum has the original sales receipt dated September 29, 1936. It lists the complete kit and options that were purchased that day for $166.00 (that's about $3500.00 today!) We are also very proud to have a photograph of the owner, Mr. William H. Boswell standing behind the kit on the day that he bought it. As a bonus, we have a copy of a book that Boswell's son wrote, compiling all of Bill's stories about his travels and where he played this set as a young man from the 1930s through the 1950s. The book tells a fascinating story of William and his band on the road playing in bars, dance halls, and hotels throughout Pennsylvania. Mr. Boswell also writes about meeting some of the top musicians of the day such as Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Eddy Duchin, and Tommy Dorsey.

This 1936 Leedy Century "Full Dress" Trap Set is one of the most complete and well documented drum sets from the 1930s in our collection. You can see and play this drumset by visiting the Northup Drums Museum. We are open by appointment 607-434-4769. **www.northupdrums.com**

Aristocrat
Addition of the trap table
1933

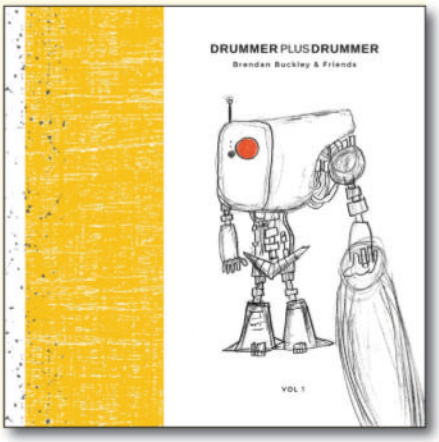
Century "Full Dress"
5"x14" Broadway Standard,
14"x28" Spartan bass drum
1934-1938



OUT NOW!

Modern Drummer is going to start spotlighting certain new recordings that have the drums at the center of their sound. These recordings might be drummer-led, or just include a high-quality, special, or unique drumming and musical performance from the drummer and/or musicians in the band. This column will not be restricted to only recordings, we will also be spotlighting new books and DVD's that are being released. We encourage our readers to listen to the recordings that inspire them, and keep looking for new musical avenues to explore. You'll never know what new music you might find inspiring! Listen and learn.

Brendan Buckley & Friends
DrummerPlusDrummer Vol. 1
Self-Produced
Brendan Buckley drums.
With: Sarab Singh, Carter McLean, Brian Griffin, Tucker Rule, Ash Soan, Victor Indrizzo, Gilmar Gomes, Todd Sucherman, Randy Cooke, Gregg Bissonette, Blair Sinta, Van Romaine, Jerry Marotta, Antonio Sanchez, Aaron Comess, Cherisse Osei, Leo Costa, Benny Greb, Jose Modeles, Craig Macintyre, Matt Musty, Moritz Mueller, Like Adams, Michael Jerome, drums.



In this album, Brendan Buckley takes listeners on a collaborative drumming journey. Brendan crafts a different concept and tone throughout the record with each track featuring a duet with an all-star drummer. These instrumental tracks provide a unique perspective and insight into the mind of each drummer.

Franco Ambrosetti
Nora
Enja Records
Peter Erskine drums

Swiss trumpet legend Franco Ambrosetti always makes great records with amazing drummers, this is no exception. *Nora* is a lush recording of ballads that were recorded with a rhythm section of pianist Uri Caine, bassist Scott Colley, guitarist John Scofield, and drummer Peter Erskine. However, this recording is about the string section led by concertmaster Sara Caswell and arranged and conducted by Alan Broadbent. Erskine is the ideal drummer for this elegant and majestic record. Peter and bassist Scott Colley fit together like a puzzle, always listening, complimenting, and caressing the music that is surrounding and running through them.

Marilyn Mazur's Shamania
Rerooting
CYH Records
Marilyn Mazur percussion
Lisbeth Diers percussion
Anna Lund drums

Danish percussionist Marilyn Mazur has created a beautiful musical soundscape that defies any musical category. It is music of the entire world. Jazz, European Classical, Folk, World, Rock, it's all in there. Mazur has recorded 14 records as a bandleader, but this one is different. Shamania is the name of her all female 10-piece band, and *Rerooting* the name of her new recording, Drummer Anna Lund and percussionist Lisbeth Diers shine throughout. Mazur, Diers, and Lund weave intricate percussive tapestries with which all the other musicians wrap themselves. This is a beautiful recording. *Rerooting* delivers a soulful and spiritual musical package.

Mata Atlantica

Retiro E Ritmo
7D Media
Marcus Reuter samples, treatments, soundscapes, field recordings
Andi Pupato percussion
Gary Husband piano
Pat Mastelotto voice

Producer Mathias Derer has assembled a huge cast of musicians to author a musical love-letter to Mata Atlantica, the rainforest of Brazil. Stemming from treatments of field recordings, Markus Reuter has amassed a multi-layered soundscape of haunting melodies, jazz harmony, grooves inspired by Brazilian rhythms, poetry, and the genuine sounds of Mata life. The modern rhythms of Brazil are the core of this inspiring record.

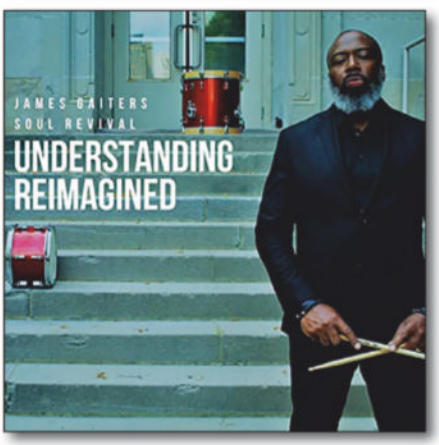
Carlo Mombelli

Lullaby for Planet Earth
CYH Records
Jorge Rossy drums and vibraphone

Bassist Carlo Mombelli has created a very unique guitar trio recording. Both Mombelli and guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel sing, while Rossy gives a very impressionistic drum performance. The word "peaceful" and the label ECM comes immediately to mind. Mombelli's voice on electric bass is very distinctive and unique. His composing is beautiful. We haven't heard a lot of Rossy since he stopped playing with Brad Meldau's trio. Rossy's own recordings playing marimba and vibraphone have been a nice surprise. But it's nice to him playing the drumset as creatively as ever.

James Gaiters Soul Revival

Understanding Reimagined
Jawgaitmusic
James Gaiters drums



The jazz organ tradition lives on with James Gaiters' Soul Revival. It is so nice to hear a drummer paying respect to the rich history of the organ groups. Gaiters plays organ classics like "Congo Chant" and "Chitlins con Carne" with a swinging band. Organist Robert Mason is holding it down as any great organist does. Together Gaiters and Mason create a wonderful foundation for guitarist Kevin Turner and saxophonist Edwin Bayard to solo and speak the truth. The arrangement of Isaac Hayes' "Soul Man" is a nice surprise, this record has some nice old school grease that is (unfortunately) becoming a little extinct in today's jazz scene. Thank you James for keeping the grease alive.

Duduka Da Fonseca Quarteto Universal

Yes!!!
Sunnyside Music
Duduka Da Fonseca drums

Duduka Da Fonseca blends Brazilian rhythms and jazz perfectly and his resume' proves just that. He has played with the legends of both genres. He brings his Brazilian heritage to his jazz playing and his sense of improvisation and swing to his Brazilian drumming. His groove is both deep and light, and his musical concept is ever evolving. This is a fantastic record of Brazilian music written by legendary composers and played by a stellar band of Brazil's best modern musicians. While many musicians play the music of Brazil from the outside looking in, the music on *Yes!!!* is Brazilian music that is being played from the inside looking out.

Hal Blaine's Ludwig and Blaemire 1960s and 70s Studio Kit

The unique studio kit that Hal Blaine designed (shown here) started with a Ludwig Super Classic blue sparkle bass drum and single-headed floor tom, along with a 6.5 X14 Supraphonic chrome snare drum (into which Hal etched his initials.) Then Hal added seven single-headed toms that featured spun-fiberglass shells made by A.F. Blaemire and fitted with Ludwig Drum hardware. The toms were mounted on two massive rolling racks so that they could be moved easily yet remain solidly in place when played.

Producers loved Hal's sweeping tom fills, which only this eight drum configuration could produce. "But it wasn't about playing a lot of drums or showing off," said Hal in an interview, "It was about helping a song to tell its story."

The success of Hal's "studio monster" had an impact on drum kit design as well. In 1973, the Ludwig Drum Company adopted Hal's design to create it's Octaplus kit. At the time of its introduction it was the biggest production Drum configuration anyone had ever seen.

This comes from the book *Crash: The World's Greatest Drum Kits,* available at **moderndrummer.com**

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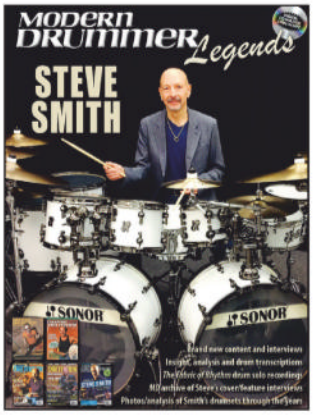

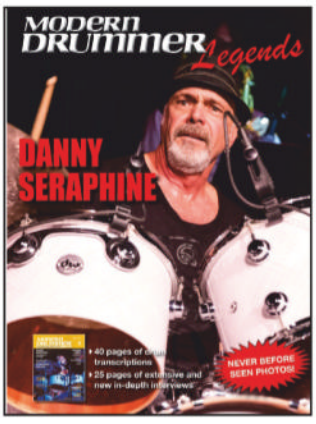

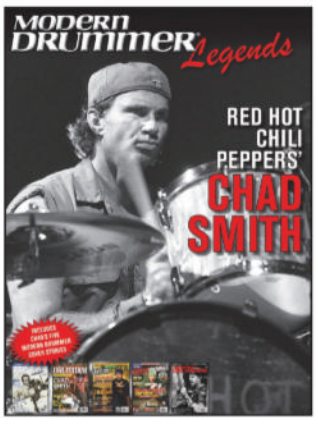

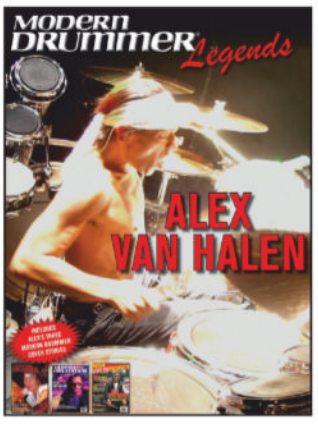

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